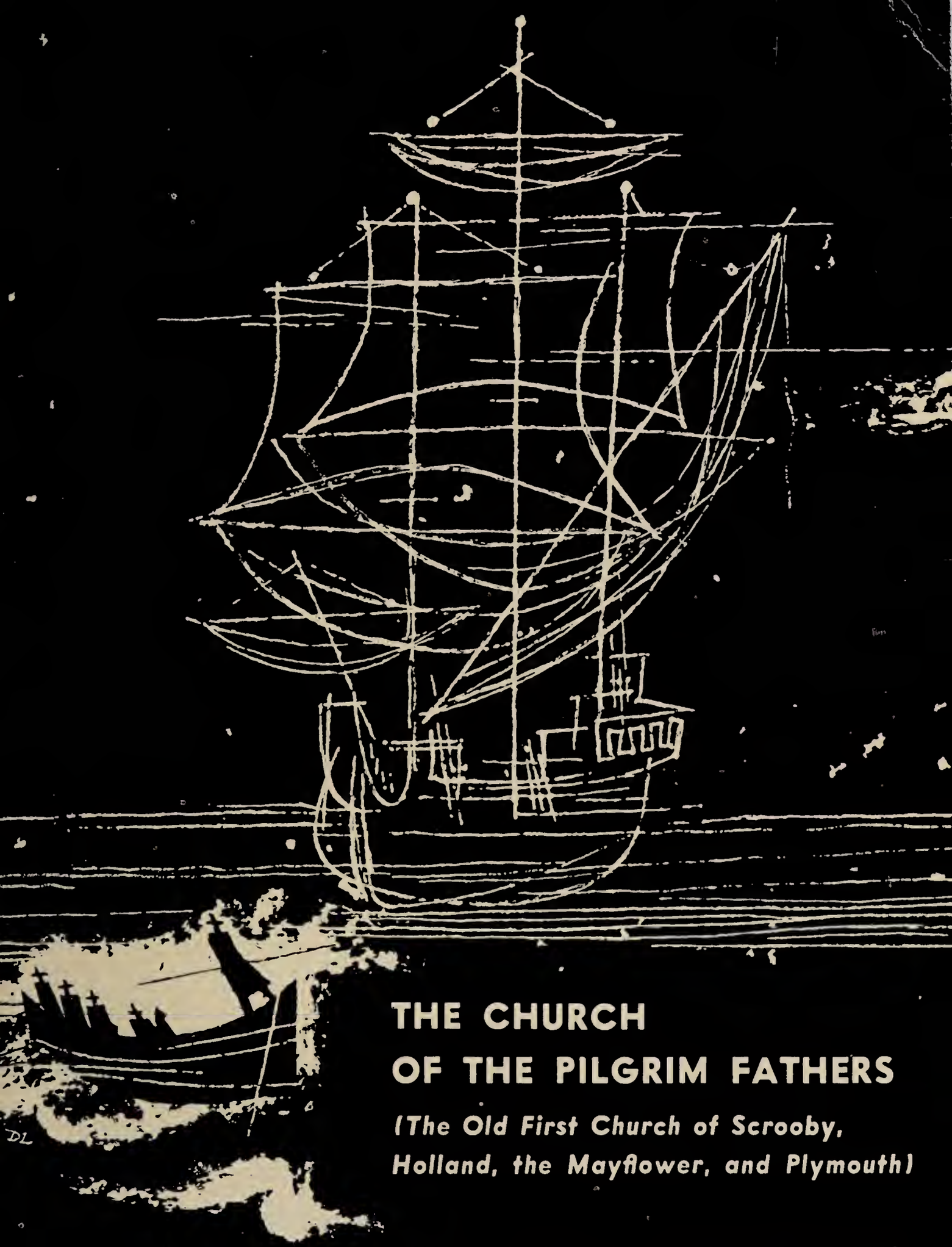


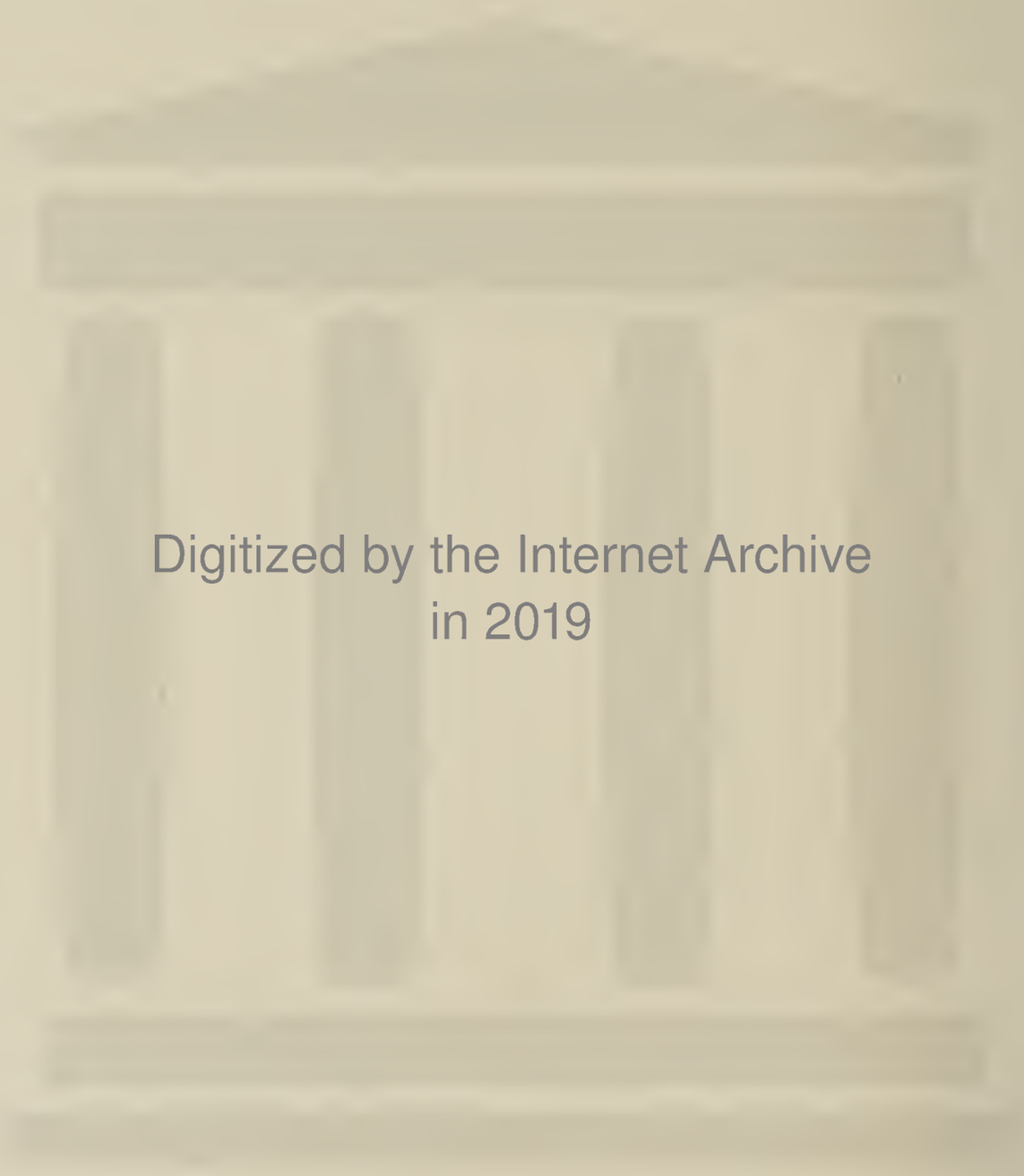
THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

(The Old First Church of Scrooby, Holland, the Mayflower, and Plymouth)

NINE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Selected and edited by **GEORGE N. MARSHALL** *from the writings of*

John Cuckson, Floyd J. Taylor, J. Ellsworth Kalas, Henry W. Royal, Arthur Lord, George N. Marshall, Arthur B. Whitney, Alfred Rodman Hussey, and Fred A. Jenks



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THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

The Church of the Pilgrim Fathers

Selected and edited by

GEORGE N. MARSHALL

from the writings of

JOHN CUCKSON, FLOYD J. TAYLOR, J. ELLSWORTH KALAS,
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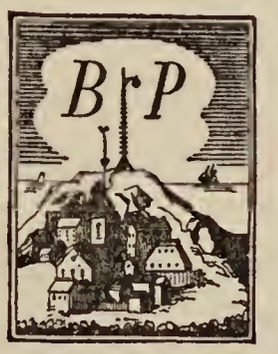

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Editor's Note

When the Beacon Press first suggested that I venture to prepare a new manuscript on the Pilgrims' legacy as mirrored through the church they founded, I was enthusiastic about the prospect. Turning to the older efforts I became convinced that what was most needed was a new gathering of existing material, told by master scholars and historians who had given the better part of their lives to the study, rather than a new effort by a single person. This volume is therefore commended to the general public as the fruit of a group of scholars and Plymouth historians rather than as the work of one man. Although each essay was originally written to stand alone, and there is some repetitive material, the essays will be found to complement one another with their individual approaches to occasionally similar subject matter.

Arthur Lord's work is most adequately covered in the essay included. His little book of Colver Lectures delivered at Brown University in 1920 is still the single most important book on *Plymouth and the Pilgrims.* John Cuckson was a scholar of great distinction; his historical interest brought him to Plymouth at the height of his career. He along with the five succeeding ministers of the First Parish — the whole of its twentieth-century ministry up to date — are represented here. Also included in this volume are Fred A. Jenks, a research historian of Plymouth; and Henry W. Royal, who served for a quarter-century as the clerk of the First Parish, and a quarter-

century as secretary of the Pilgrim Society and curator of Pilgrim Hall.

The compiler, who is the present minister, is greatly indebted to Henry W. Royal, Miss Rose Briggs, Miss Katharine Lord, and Miss Marion Park for reading the manuscript and making valuable suggestions. Miss Briggs, daughter of Dean Briggs of Harvard College, is considered the most authentic source of Pilgrim data in Plymouth; Miss Lord, president emeritus of the Winsor School, and one time faculty member at Bryn Mawr College, is a Plymouth resident with the virtue of complete integrity for fact; so also is Miss Marion Park, president emeritus of Bryn Mawr College. While much that is worthwhile in this compilation is due to their valuable suggestions, in matters of preference and in decisions regarding the inclusion of a few incidents in the compiler's own essays, the author has reserved to himself the right of final decision. Consequently he alone is responsible for the final form of the manuscript.

Valuable aid in checking the manuscript was given by Bruce F. Smith who generously undertook the arduous task of reading the proofs and advising on consistency throughout the various chapters.

Appreciation is also extended to the Beacon Press for conceiving the original plan. Much laborious work was done in the transcribing of earlier manuscripts and in preparing the final draft by Miss Doris Ambrose. To her, as to my wife, Barbara A. Marshall, my sincerest appreciation is extended.

GEORGE N. MARSHALL

Plymouth, Massachusetts

Illustrations

THE FLAVOR OF THE PILGRIM SAGA may never be adequately captured in pictures because of the dearth of contemporary illustrations. Only one authentic portrait of a Pilgrim Father is known, that of Edward Winslow in Pilgrim Hall. We present here a few pictures of buildings and places familiar to them, and others that mark the continuing stream of their church throughout the subsequent centuries.

Three English photographs are included: the Scrooby Manor House, where the Pilgrim congregation met and worshiped; the Old Hall, Gainsborough, where the original Separatist group of Clyfton and Robinson met in 1602; and the quaint doorway of the church in Austerfield, in which William Bradford was christened and reared, and which was the inspiration for the doorway of the present meetinghouse of the Pilgrim memorial church of the First Parish.

The Dutch photographs include the church in Delftshaven (whose threshold is now in the First Parish church in Plymouth), where the Pilgrims worshiped before sailing for the New World; and a waterfront scene at Delftshaven, the point of embarkation for the New World. The John Robinson memorial is typical of the many in Leyden to the Pilgrim sojourn there.

The four meetinghouse pictures are self-explanatory. The drawings, made by Mrs. Mary Drew Davis, hang in the First Church. The first sketch, that of the building of 1683, is a copy of an ancient drawing in Pilgrim Hall, formerly in the possession of the family of William S. Russell.

The photographs of the present meetinghouse, and of the central windows depicting the signing of the *Mayflower* Com-

pact, were made by Walter Rosenblum. The spirit captured in the Compact window, rising above the open Bible on the John Howland pulpit, and flanked by the religious-liberty and civil-liberty windows, brings to mind the spirit of John Robinson: "The Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from out his Holy Word."

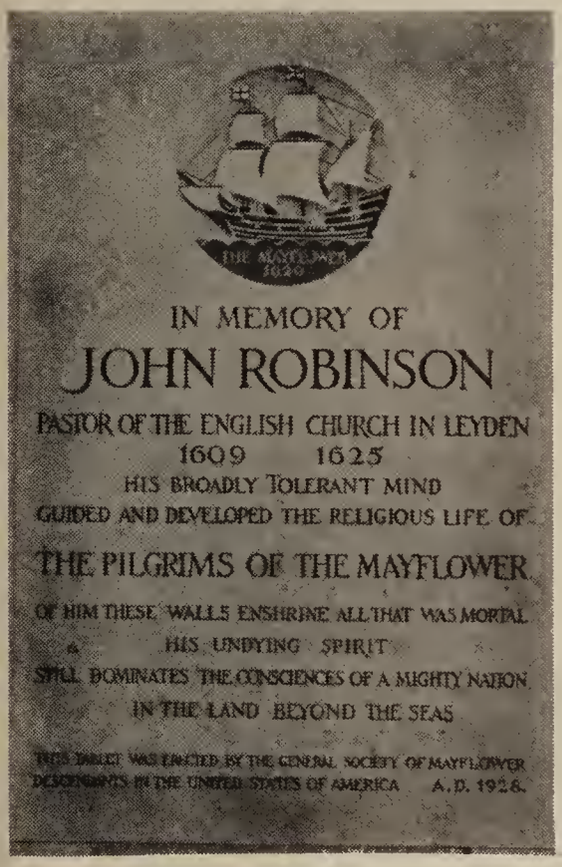
The windows in the front of the church building were photographed by Joseph T. Dickson. The three-paneled window of the Pilgrim embarkation from Delftshaven — with John Robinson preaching his farewell sermon and the *Speedwell* about to sail — is a truly inspiring sight. The smaller windows carry the story of the Pilgrim enterprise to the shores of New Plymouth. We see the landing on Plymouth Rock, the signing of the peace treaty with Massasoit, and the scene of the first trial by jury in the Western Hemisphere. From another panel of windows, we have selected that of the destruction of the Pilgrim press in Choir Alley, Leyden — an early instance of restriction of the press, when the English forced the Dutch government, by terms of a treaty for mutual protection, to disband a press considered scurrilous to the English crown. This event convinced the Pilgrims that they must flee even farther to escape the long arm of the British king. These last four windows are made from English medieval glass. All the stained or colored glass windows in the church were designed by the American artist Edward Peck Sperry.

The church auditorium, shown during a service of worship, was photographed by John Armstrong, who also photographed the re-enactment of the Pilgrim walk to church, coming up Town Square just in front of the church. Each Friday afternoon in August, this simple and significant pageantry is performed by the townspeople. It is popularly called the "Pilgrim Progress." The procession goes to the site of the Fort on top of the hill, where words of Pilgrim faith and courage are read.

OLD HALL, GAINSBOROUGH

THE BRADFORD DOORWAY

SCROOBY MANOR


IN MEMORY OF
JOHN ROBINSON
PASTOR OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN LEYDEN
1609 1625
HIS BROADLY TOLERANT MIND
GUIDED AND DEVELOPED THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF
THE PILGRIMS OF THE MAYFLOWER
OF HIM THESE WALLS ENSHRINE ALL THAT WAS MORTAL
HIS UNDYING SPIRIT
STILL DOMINATES THE CONSCIENCES OF A MIGHTY NATION
IN THE LAND BEYOND THE SEAS
THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF MAYFLOWER
DESCENDANTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA A.D. 1926.

A LEYDEN MEMORIAL

DELFTSHAVEN CHURCH

POINT OF EMBARKATION

1683

1744

1831

1899

Signing of the Compact

JOHN ROBINSON'S FAREWELL SERMON

THE LANDING TREATY WITH MASSASOIT FIRST TRIAL BY JURY

DESTRUCTION OF THE PILGRIM'S PRESS IN LEYDEN

THE MODERN CHURCH

THE PILGRIMS WALK AGAIN

Foreword

"OLD FIRST"

THE PILGRIM TRADITION is strong throughout America, and in churches of many faiths references and names are often used to suggest the Pilgrim heritage. Undoubtedly this is as it should be, for the Pilgrim tradition is the basis of our democratic culture in America. The *Mayflower* Compact was the original American instrument of democratic government. The town-meeting concept was established by the Pilgrim Fathers, as was the annual election of officers. They sought to establish religious freedom and safeguard it with civil liberty. They held the first trial by jury in the western hemisphere in 1624. The civil and religious principles to which they bore witness have so greatly influenced the evolution of American thought, that the Pilgrim Fathers have come to typify some of the elements of our common heritage which we hold closest to our hearts.

If the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth had not become the core of the New England settlements — the first and central settlement — it is entirely probable that the colonization of America, and the type of settlements evolving, might have been organized in an undemocratic fashion, and hence shaped our heritage in a far different way. We recall that the Massachusetts Puritans who followed the Pilgrims and settled in the Boston Bay area embraced a concept dif-

ferent from that of the Pilgrim Separatists. Aboard ship, their minister, Francis Higginson, preached: "We will not say as the Separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, Farewell Babylon! Farewell Rome! But we will say, Farewell, dear England. Farewell, the church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there. We do not go to New England as Separatists from the Church of England. . . ."

And yet, when the Puritans organized their church in Salem that year, and installed their ministers without benefit of bishops, but with the aid of Deacon Samuel Fuller of Plymouth Colony, they had departed from the original premise of their effort, as did the First Church of Boston (Charlestown) immediately afterward. Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster, and Deacon Fuller participated in the installation of the Salem church, and were instrumental in having the Book of Common Prayer banished from use. For objecting to this, two members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were promptly returned to England as "schismatiques" when they recalled their earlier intentions. So quickly was "the Pilgrim saddle on the Bay horse," as one of their members remarked not too long afterward.

There is reason, therefore, for the general acceptance of the Pilgrim tradition as our indigenous and common birthright. It gives us a liberal, progressive and democratic tradition as old as the New England adventure itself. Not as liberal nor as progressive nor as democratic as we today, perhaps, but certainly far more so than any other religious or civil venture of that time. And as the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, New Haven, Rhode Island, and the northern settlements and outposts grew up around it, its influence radiated. The Plymouth colony

was to work as a leaven, for it was still significant that the Pilgrim and Puritan did not become identical movements. The Puritans became conformists in religious doctrine and manners. The Pilgrims never sacrificed their individual rights. The Puritans rapidly became Calvinistic; the Pilgrims followed the liberal tradition of their first pastor, John Robinson. Edward Winslow recorded Robinson's farewell sermon thus:

> [Robinson] took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed Churches who were come to a period in their religion and would go no further than the instruments of their reformation. As for example: the Lutherans they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted or revealed to Calvin, they would rather die than embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists they stick where he left them, — a misery much to be lamented. . . .

To borrow that wonderful phrase of Emerson's, Calvinism was but "a whip to the mind" of the Pilgrims.

The history of their church was to emphasize this liberality. The Pilgrims were stern, but also humane and generous. They allowed differences of theological opinion to exist, so long as moral conduct was maintained. They permitted ministers to vary in the administration of the sacraments, so long as there were clergymen to minister to those of different convictions. They asked ministers to agree to honor the contrary religious practices of members of the congregation. Roger Williams served them for a while, and though some considered his views unstable, he departed the parish an honored teacher, at his own desire, and the Pilgrims would gladly have welcomed him back

following his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The church of the Pilgrim Fathers has continued from the earliest settlement to the present time, and flourishes still. Though Governor Bradford wrote despairingly of "this poore church left like an ancient mother, growne olde, and forsaken of her children . . ." as members withdrew to establish the distant settlements of Duxbury, Marshfield, and Eastham, the "poore mother" continued and in time renewed herself.

It stands today, a mighty witness to the power of faith and to the Pilgrim spirit. On the slope of the hill where the Pilgrims first worshipped in that bleak December of 1620, in its fifth meeting house, its records unbroken, and its services continuous, the Plymouth Church stands, having spanned the turbulence of over three and a quarter centuries of social growth and upheaval.

It is often forgotten that the Pilgrim Fathers who founded a colony in the name of their faith, were the founders of a church and a parish; and that this same church and parish exist today, the continuing flame of that original gathering. It is a church of unbroken witness and continuity of faith with those founding fathers, rededicated to its purpose in every generation. Its present congregation maintains a successive continuity of worship with the Pilgrim band of the *Mayflower*. It is, today, the oldest organization of any kind in America.

G. N. M.

THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

I

The Genesis of the Pilgrim Church

BY JOHN CUCKSON

THE STORY OF THE GENESIS of the Pilgrim movement, its rise in England, the flight of its founders to Holland, the perilous voyage across the Atlantic, the founding of a new colony in America in the depths of winter and among hostile savages, the annals of persecution, suffering and death, constitute one of the most interesting and inspiring epics in the history of religion. It began at the opening of the seventeenth century. England had officially renounced the ecclesiastical authority of Pope Clement VII and accepted that of Henry VIII. But, as the ideas, principles and habits of a nation in religious matters are not easily transplanted, the incipient Protestantism of the age was only a crude growth. The passage from the political theology of the Vatican to the theological politics of Lambeth Palace was but a short step towards the complete enfranchisement of the individual mind and conscience, which is the logical result of the Protestant principle. People who had been disciplined for ages to mistrust their

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Adapted from *A Brief History of the First Church in Plymouth* (Boston, 1901); reissued in 1920 (Beacon Press, Boston).

own faculties in religious thinking were slow to leave what seemed to them safe anchorage, and to trust their souls to the unauthorized guidance of unconventional reformers, and their churches to the secular power. Many of them parted from the Papacy with reluctance, only to cling to Episcopacy which, at that time, was the nearest approach to it — the outer line of freedom, beyond which was nothing but chaos. Others, like the Presbyterians, Brownists, Anabaptists and Independents felt and acted more courageously, and moved as if they were marching on a road with numerous hostelries, but where there was no rest for their feet short of complete liberty for the individual conscience.

The reigns of Mary and Elizabeth were spotted with all sorts of heresies and schisms, and it was not strange, therefore, that the bishops of Rome and the New Church of England looked upon the Reformation in Europe and the British Isles as an ecclesiastical Frankenstein, over which they might lose control to the lasting harm of the Christian religion. It appeared to them, in all its crude shapes, as a many-headed monster which they were forced to combat even unto death, and with whatever weapons they could command.

The translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular, and the slow dissemination of biblical knowledge among the people had led independent and vigorous minds to read and think for themselves, and to study the Bible without gloss or comment. They brought to this study an eager thirst for the truth, and an unwarped judgment which no creed could inspire. To know that they were privileged to read the sacred message themselves, and with such light as God had given them, and to feel that it was their su-

preme duty to stand firmly by their own convictions and the dictates of conscience, gave them that moral confidence in the divineness of their mission, which in larger measure filled the souls of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin and Knox, when they took their faith undiluted from the Gospels. There was a reality to their convictions when they read the clear and simple language of the Scriptures, a reality which did not come to them as they listened to the second-hand jargon of the creeds. At last they were satisfied that the teachings of the New Testament and the early centuries of Christianity were, in a marked degree, different from the conflicting and confusing dogmas of later ages. No wonder, then, that so many of them decided to renounce "the traditions of the elders," the mere husks of doctrinal controversy, and take their faith from the Gospels themselves, and their ecclesiastical polity from the book of Acts and St. Paul's Epistles. The Bible, as they understood it, thus became the charter of their religious belief, and in its exposition, they were satisfied that neither church nor priest held exclusive rights or privileges. Christianity as Christ and the Apostles taught it, with individual freedom of mind and conscience, and without coercion and persecution, became the watchword of thousands of sturdy Protestants on whom the light of the Reformation was dawning.

There never had been a great religious party of Anglo-Saxons, in any generation, who set the right of private judgment and the imperative duty of supreme loyalty to truth more boldly in the forefront of their lives than did our sturdy Pilgrim Fathers. False men and hypocrites crept into their ranks, but the great old leaders, who were deeply conscientious and devout, and who suffered in

dark days, have few equals in any age of the world's history. The characteristic note of their piety was the sovereign importance which it attached to truth, to the secret and free intercourse of every living soul with God, and a perfect loyalty to God's will; a piety theirs, not of holy places or of sacred ritual, or of symbols that kindled the imagination — it was a piety personal, intimate and inward; one that each man showed to his Maker, entering alone, as they put it, into covenant with God, through Jesus Christ. It was that lonely communion of man with God, in which authority demands and obedience yields, and with which no stranger was permitted to meddle that made them great, and their lives, bereft of all else, still worth living. For that, they were prepared to suffer and endure; for that, they were contented like Abraham to follow the divine behest, going out, not knowing whither they went, singlehanded, if need be; at all cost, with loss of home and possessions, if so be, they might better acquit them like men, and honor their integrity. Theirs was a serious and masterful religion, not to be kept, but with suffering and loss. It was a religion that gripped men by their consciences, and laid on their souls the awful mandate of Heaven, and ruled them by the voice of God.

But, it may be asked, did not this intensity of faith lead many of them into narrowness and fanaticism? Were they not uncomfortable people to live with? In the midst of mendacity, frivolity, immorality, yes; but, surrounded by veracity, courage, virtue, no. The Pilgrim was unhappy himself, and the source of unhappiness to others in the midst of conditions which aroused his moral indignation; but he was contented and peaceful enough, in any environment, which harmonized with personal and public virtue.

Needless to say, the stalwart fathers were not perfect. They lived without the light of modern science and learning. They did not, and could not, understand the Scriptures as they are understood today; they did not have the aid of modern scholarship to guide them in a more accurate interpretation of the Bible; many of them did less than justice to the natural beauties of Creation and the innocent joys of life; they set the stern sovereignty of God above the Father's love; but to say this is only to say that they did their best in a bad time. Exaggerations, limitations, mistakes cling to men in every age; but in spite of these, the great thing was that they bore their testimony to truth and asserted their freedom in an age when men cared nothing for the one, and were doing their best to crush the other. It did not occur to them to stop and parley with prudent considerations, or to wait and see what loyalty to righteousness would cost them; they heard the divine voice, and sought to make it the rule of their lives, preferring the life of heroic duty with all its hard experience, to a useless enjoyment of social respectability or self-indulgence.

Our Pilgrim Fathers fled from persecution not only because of their dissenting opinions, but also from the deadening and desolating influence of Sacerdotalism and ceremony. The creeds had entered into the Book of Common Prayer, and religion among their contemporaries had degenerated into superstitious formality. Devotional liturgies rested upon a framework of dogma in which they did not believe, and were full of phrases and ascriptions they could not honestly repeat. It was to get rid of this, quite as much as to escape the tyranny of false dogmas, that they reluctantly but resolutely forsook the Church, and wor-

shipped apart in the cold shadow of despised dissent.

They were not sectaries delighting in separation. For a long period they hesitated to break away from the ancient church with its prestige and noble history. They refused to organize themselves or to ordain their own ministers until nothing else was left for them to do. The love of union and fellowship was deep and strong within them, but they felt it must be union in the midst of diversity, the fellowship of minds which cannot think alike, and not the profligate sentimentalism which on the surface, but nowhere else, looks like a love-feast of sects.

In this respect, we have much to learn from them. Our own age, which differs so widely from theirs, is yet, in the matter of religious fellowship on a broad and catholic basis, in much the same condition. If we imagine that the evils against which they contended have passed away, we imagine a vain thing. The old ecclesiastical spirit of intolerance and exclusion, though harmless now compared with what it was three centuries ago, is with us still. Except among comparatively few minds in every church, religion is a thing of sects and creeds, and the lines of separation are strictly drawn. The spirit of the age is in advance of the churches and rebukes bigotry every time it shows itself; but the barriers between one ecclesiastical sheepfold and another are as high and as strong as ever, except in isolated spots. The tasks which engaged our spiritual forefathers are yet unfinished, and the duties which shaped the action of Robinson, Brewster, Bradford, and Winslow, have lost none of their imperativeness for this generation. Love and service have not yet supplanted dogma and exclusiveness as the foundation of fellowship, although the teaching of Jesus was so clear and emphatic.

And the duty is incumbent upon us, when the time appears ripe, to aid in the reconciliation of all Protestant sects, to see that the terms shall be so inclusive and liberal that every succeeding generation shall delight to add a new link to the chain.

In the meantime, much light and leading may be drawn from the character and experience of those who in lonely exile and comparative freedom from prejudice and meddlesome interference, laid the foundations, broad and deep, of the civil and religious liberty, upon which alone, an enlightened and durable civilization can be reared.

II

The Protestant Reformation in England lacked cohesion and consistency. It did not follow any clearly defined lines, but was sporadic, breaking out here and there in independent movements which were not only unrelated, but often fiercely hostile to each other. One of these departures from the Church, established by law, began near the North East Coast at the point where the three counties of York, Nottingham, and Lincoln converged. The little towns of Gainsborough, Scrooby, and Austerfield sheltered a group of scholarly, brave, zealous inquirers, who quietly and for conscience's sake, nourished their liberty, and without knowing it, were fanning a flame which was destined to become a beacon light of history.

One John Smyth was at the head of a Brownist community at Gainsborough. William Bradford, religiously disposed from his early youth, was brooding intently on the signs of the times at Austerfield. William Brewster, relieved from the cares of diplomacy and court intrigue,

was wrestling with the religious problems of his day in the quiet retreat of Scrooby Manor. All of them were touched by the new light which was breaking upon the religion of England, and were cherishing a more than common interest in the deep things of a nation's spiritual life. Grave, devout men, they were concerned about the morals and manners of the age, and certain that the Church of Christ was drifting farther and farther from its Scriptural moorings. The National Church was anti-Christ. It had erred from the true faith of the Gospels. Its bishops and ordained clergy were worldly. Its church members were too frequently wanton and evil-livers; and beliefs which should commend themselves to the minds and consciences of men, and ought not to be accepted in any other way, were being forced upon them by laws, temporal and spiritual. What could these men do? It was against their conscience to feign satisfaction with things as they were and to make no protest. It was cowardly to consent to what was untrue, and criminal not to raise their voices in rebuke of wickedness in high places. Their own deep needs, and the spiritual hunger of those about them, made it necessary for them to meet together whenever and wherever they could safely do so, to worship in secret, — like the persecuted Covenanters of Scotland and Huguenots of France. The views they held were heretical. The protests they felt called upon to make against the teaching and ritual of the powerful churches of their day laid them open to fine and imprisonment. And, yet, the impulse to preach and to pray, and the obligation to prophesy, were irresistible. They could not be indifferent and would not be silent.

The leader in this daring movement was William

Brewster (1560?-1644), who belonged to a good family and received an excellent education, being for some time at Cambridge University. After leaving college, he, probably in 1584, entered the service of William Davison, ambassador, and afterwards Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth. He was accounted a man of marked probity and practical wisdom, skilled in business affairs, and commanding the confidence of his employers. He accompanied Davison on a mission to the Netherlands in 1585, and remained in his service until 1587, when, as Bradford informs us, "he retired into the country," to Scrooby Manor House, where he resided, and had charge of the postal-service. There he made the acquaintance of John Smyth, who was at the head of a Separatist community at Gainsborough (1602), and by whom he was greatly influenced, until he developed a strong personal interest in religion, and in "good preaching." Here in this historic house, which had sheltered Margaret, Queen of Scotland, Cardinal Wolsey, and Henry VIII, Brewster gathered about him able and godly clergymen and laymen, lovers of freedom and haters of religious persecution, Puritans and Brownists, who found in their host an ardent and generous sympathizer. On the Lord's Day, we are told that Brewster "entertained with great love" this group of godly heretics, who without binding themselves to any formal creed or ritual, such as those by which the age was so grievously tormented, "joyned themselves, (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye Gospel, to walke in all his ways, made known, or to be made known, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."

It soon became obvious that the little community needed

a preacher and pastor, and it fell to the lot of one Richard Clyfton, sometime Vicar of Marnham in Nottinghamshire, and later, Rector of Babworth, near Scrooby, to become the first shepherd of the flock. He was well-known in that vicinity as a scholarly and godly man, beloved by people of varying belief, "a grave and reverend preacher." Though somewhat advanced in life, he was active and energetic, and had made himself greatly beloved throughout the outlying towns and villages. The fact that he was a beneficed clergyman did not prevent him from affiliation with heretics, or others similarly situated, from being members or ministers of dissenting congregations. It is conjectured that John Robinson (1576?-1625), a graduate of Cambridge, and curate in the Established Church, a man of great natural gifts and scholarly attainments, joined the Scrooby community in 1607. He became associated with Clyfton as teacher of religious doctrine, and with William Brewster as ruling elder.

The civil and ecclesiastical authorities were on the alert for heretics, and their attention was soon drawn to this little group of religious reformers. After the church had held together about a year, modestly exercising its independence, and doing quiet religious work in its own way, it was suddenly scattered by relentless persecution. Prelacy was bent upon restoring such men to its fold, or harrying them out of the land. There was no safety except in recantation, or in flight. They would not recant, and so were forced to think of exile. Some set out for Holland, but the captain, in whose ship they had taken passage from Boston, betrayed them, and their leader William Brewster was imprisoned and "bound over to the Court of Assize." In the summer of 1608, they were more fortunate. A

Dutch skipper, awaiting a cargo at Hull, agreed to take them to Holland. They were to meet him at a spot on the coast between Hull and Grimsby, far enough away from any town. A small bark was engaged to take them to the appointed place, and at the time fixed they gathered on the shore, but owing to delay on the part of the vessel which was to carry them away, and difficulties with their own boat, the authorities were apprised of their escape, and while the men, women, children and cargo were being embarked, they suddenly descried the approach of a great company with bills and guns and weapons, both on horse and on foot, who had arrived to prevent their escape. The fugitives were thrown into confusion. Some were on board the Dutch vessel, others were on shore, families were divided, their goods were confiscated, wives were separated from their husbands, and children from their parents. Those on board the ship asked to be put on shore again, dreading to be torn from those they loved, and to leave their families helpless and destitute, but the captain would not yield. He weighed anchor, spread sails, and amid tears and grief inexpressible, the once united and happy families were ruthlessly torn asunder. Their cup of misery was not even then quite full. They encountered a fearful storm at sea, in which they saw neither moon nor stars, and were driven towards the coast of Norway. For fourteen days they were in peril on the sea, often expecting every moment that the vessel would founder, distracted with fears, and crying unto the Lord to save them. Finally, after much anguish and suffering they arrived in Amsterdam. The fate of those that were left ashore was not less fearful. They fled from the soldiers, some making good their escape, and others, prevented by family ties, remaining to

take care of the women and children. Many of them were apprehended, and hurried from one court to another, destitute, tormented, afflicted, until it was hard to know what to do with them. Women and children were homeless, friendless, forsaken, exposed to the cold, and fainting for lack of food. After their long misery, the sky cleared, and a way was opened for them; in the end, as Bradford graphically tells us, "notwithstanding all these stormes of opposition, they all gatt over at length, some at one time and some at another, and some in one place and some in another, and mette togeather againe according to their desires, with no small rejoycing."

III

The capital of the Netherlands afforded safe shelter for persecuted fugitives who were sober, thrifty, peaceable and law-abiding. The Scrooby contingent did not, therefore, find themselves strangers in a strange land. Two Separatist communities from England were already settled there, one which had fled from London in 1593, presided over by Francis Johnson, pastor, and Henry Ainsworth, teacher; and the other from Gainsborough, at the head of which was their old friend John Smyth. The former was a large and flourishing church, numbering three hundred communicants, the latter, which had existed there little more than a year, was not so strong. The fact that Amsterdam since 1573 had harbored all sorts of heresies, and had become famous in prose and verse as the breeding ground of schisms, was not favorable to the possibilities of unity and concord among the new settlers, who after separation and delay were at last united, with John Robinson

and William Brewster at their head. The two existing congregations were not at peace among themselves. They were torn by controversies and dissensions in which the Scrooby Pilgrims had no part, but into which they might easily be drawn. It was therefore decided, that in the interests of the community, it would be better to retire from the scene of so much ungodly strife, and to seek a home elsewhere, more favorable to their religious development. On the 12th of February 1609, they obtained permission from the authorities of Leyden to settle there, and on the 1st of May they removed thither. Amsterdam was the center of bustling commerce, while Leyden, though possessing great manufacturing industries, especially the spinning and weaving of cloth, was above all else academic. Its famous university, opened in 1575, attracted students from foreign lands, and continued, through the fame of such professors as Lipsius, Vossius, Heinsius, Gronovius, Hemsterhuis, Ruhuken, Valckenaer, Scaliger, Descartes, and Boerhaave, to be an intellectual power in Europe. Here the problems of learning, of philosophy, of theology, and biblical exegesis, were discussed with absolute freedom, and before an audience sufficiently large and interested to produce, at times, unusual excitement.

When the Pilgrims arrived in Holland, they were without a pastor. Clyfton felt the infirmities of advancing years a sufficient obstacle to emigration. Still, John Robinson and William Brewster, who were the last of the original flock to reach Amsterdam, remained with them. The former was elected and publicly ordained to be their minister, the latter was chosen as their elder. The society numbered about one hundred members, and steadily increased to three hundred. There were three deacons, two of whom

were John Carver and Samuel Fuller. After a while, they purchased a large dwelling, which in 1611 was used as pastor's residence and meeting-house. It stood under the shadow of the belfry tower of St. Peter's Church, and in the rear of it, twenty-one cottages were erected for poor emigrants.

The Pilgrims commended themselves by their devoutness and high character to the citizens of Leyden, who showed them great consideration, and would have emphasized this respect still more, but for the fear of offending England. The magistrates of the city were wont to contrast their peaceable demeanor with the strifes and quarrels of refugees from other nations. "These English," said they, "have lived among us now these twelve years, and yet we never had any suit or accusation come against any of them." They were the type of citizens who added strength and quality to any community. Their pastor was first and last a preacher and teacher; he concerned himself with his proper function, not turning aside to alien issues however tempting, but laboring incessantly to build up the lives of his flock on the truths and principles of the Gospel, and in all the ways of pure and godly living. His mind was of the type which resists foreclosure, lies open to the light, and adjusts itself to whatever truth of nature or of life presents satisfactory credentials. Not owing allegiance to any stereotyped creed, he refused to set the seal of his authority upon any compendium of divinity, or final theological statement, however small, for the use of his followers; and so the Scrooby covenant, simple, positive, practical, undogmatic, remained in Holland, and later in New England, the only compass by which the fathers guided themselves through the turbid waters of

religious controversy, by which they were so frequently surrounded. It was the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice at Scrooby, at Amsterdam, at Leyden, at Plymouth, and is to this day, at the end of three centuries, an adequate bond of Christian fellowship.

It is impossible to do justice to the powerful influence of John Robinson upon the Pilgrims. He swayed as with magic the minds of men like Brewster, Bradford, Carver and Winslow, who in many respects were his equals. He commanded their confidence and respect while he was near them, and when the ocean divided him from them, they kept his name and character in unfading remembrance. The spirit and polity of the church in Plymouth owed its continued existence to him, preserving its integrity during the first trying years of American exile, through his sagacious counsel, and against the subtle blandishments of the Adventurers in London, and the dislike and suspicion of the unmitred prelates of Salem. The Church was Separatist in Leyden, and remained Separatist and independent through its long struggle in the wilderness of New England. It stood alone, and held its own, maintaining friendly relations with kindred communities, but always jealously guarding its freedom in all matters pertaining to the liberty of the individual conscience and the absolute right of self-government.

And, in the annals of that time, when civil and religious liberty was only beginning to be understood, the temper and attitude of this community and its pastor were remarkable. It is true that more than a hundred years before the Pilgrims sailed from Holland, Sir Thomas More had written his Utopia, or ideal of a State, in which he had declared that Utopus, the founder, had made a law that

every man might be of whatever religion he pleased, and might endeavour to draw others to it by force of argument, and by amicable and modest ways; but those who used reproaches or violence in their attempts were to be condemned to banishment. Nevertheless, this view of religious toleration was looked upon in that age, as it is in many quarters even now, as altogether visionary and impracticable; and he who taught it, one of the serenest and most beautiful souls in history, was only like a voice crying in the wilderness. Not until the years 1644 and 1647 when John Milton issued his *Areopagitica,* "or speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing," and Jeremy Taylor published his *Liberty of Prophesying,* more than twenty years after the *Mayflower* started on her eventful voyage, was there any attempt in England to set forth the true principles of civil and religious liberty. Yet, the exiles at Leyden were illustrating ideas and principles, learned in the hard school of persecution and suffering, to which later generations have added little, and from which they have had little to take away. It was enough for them that they recognized the sufficiency of Scripture, the validity of reason and conscience under divine control, the spiritual authority of Jesus Christ, the plain teaching of the Gospels, and the necessity to salvation, of personal godliness. Practical loyalty to their great spiritual Head, was what concerned them most, and made them such rigid disciplinarians in matters of conduct and character. Vice was the worst heresy with which they had to deal. They were less careful, all through their history, that their followers should agree or disagree with their views than that they should walk justly and circumspectly, and live pure and upright lives. John Calvin set himself to purify the State,

and establish the government of Geneva upon a Christian basis, stamping out vice and crime, and ruling shameless iniquity with a rod of iron. And the Pilgrim Fathers thoroughly believed in the feasibility of a Christian Republic, in which pure living was, in the Apostolic sense, equivalent to sound doctrine, and personal righteousness, the best proof of salvation.

This accounts, in large measure, for the comparative absence among them of pitiful wrangling about words, (which characterized so many of their contemporaries), and the concentration of their energy and enthusiasm upon the growth of Christian morals and manners in their community. Sinners of the obdurate type always gave them the greatest trouble, and neither wealth, social status, nor any other consideration could save such from their stern condemnation. All who wished to enter their society, or stay there, must not by their conduct or bearing bring reproach upon the community. They were resolved, that the church should set the type of living for the world, and not the world for the church. "They came as near the primitive pattern of the first churches, as any other churches of these latter times, hath done, according to their rank and quality."[1]

[1] Bradford, First Church Records.

II

John Robinson: Two Modern Studies

1. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LIBERAL

BY FLOYD J. TAYLOR

"One may justly say of him that if we reckon importance by influence, by encouragement of associates, by the spirit which he instilled into a great enterprise, no other founder of the Pilgrim colony has higher claims to grateful remembrance than this leader who never set foot upon its soil. Others courageously executed the task for which his patient ministry had done much to fit them; and the inspiration to their endeavor was largely his work. As such, whether viewed from the standpoint of one interested in the development of a branch of the Christian Church, or of one investigating the beginnings of American colonization and political life, the career of John Robinson is of permanent significance."—WILLISTON WALKER in *John Robinson: The Pilgrim Pastor* by G. S. Davis.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ROBINSON'S LIFE is distressingly meager. The date of his birth can be fixed at 1575 or 1576, by virtue of an entry in the records of the University at Ley-

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den which states that he was admitted on September 5, 1615, being then thirty-nine years of age. He was born in England, probably at Gainsborough, but nothing is known of his family. He entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1592, becoming a fellow in 1598. Shortly after this he became a curate in the Church of England. He became associated with the Pilgrim Church at Scrooby soon after its formation in 1606, having left the Church of England for reasons of conscience. He remained there as the members of the Scrooby church were fleeing to Holland family by family, making his escape with the last of them and finding refuge at Amsterdam, where there was freedom from persecution, but incessant wrangling among the members of the English churches. This was more than Robinson could endure and, driven by the conviction that the din of petty bickering was the surest way to drown out the voice of God, he led a small group to the city of Leyden. There in a few short years — for he died in 1625 — the great principles that he loved were rendered so attractive, as illustrated by his life, that they became in turn the foundation of that church and later of the Plymouth Colony.

Robinson was an individualist. Theologically he was strongly Calvinistic and became justly famous for his defense of that position in the debates that were held at the University of Leyden. Yet, at the same time, he was amazingly tolerant of those whose beliefs differed from his own. Calvinism was distilled in his personality to emerge as the prototype of liberalism.

The term "Separatist" as applied to the Pilgrim Church and Robinson is misleading. Arthur Lord quotes Winslow as having said: "The foundation of our New England

Plantations was not laid upon Schisme, division or Separation, but upon love, peace and holiness." It was not required of members of the church in the confession of their faith "that they either renounce or in one word contest with the Church of England, whatsoever the world clamours of us this way." Furthermore, the first minister of the Plymouth Church was sent across by the Church of England and readily accepted by the Pilgrims — albeit to their sorrow. Robinson was, however, the great champion of Independency, or the Congregational Polity. He defined the true church in his *Apologia* (1619), and this is translated in an English edition of 1625:

> Neither was Peter or Paul more one, whole, entire, and perfect man, consisting of their parts essential and integral, without relation unto other men, than is a particular congregation, rightly instituted and ordered, a whole, entire, and perfect church immediately and independently, in respect of other churches, under Christ alone.

It should be remarked that the writings of Robinson that appeared during the early years of his exile bear more than a trace of bitterness toward not only the Established Church, which had driven him and his people from England, but also toward certain Separatists whose convictions did not coincide with his own. However, this hardness was mellowed by the years and the Robinson who influenced history was the man whose strong convictions and passion for truth were warmed and enriched by the spirit of a wise kindliness; it was during this period that he became one of the great liberals of the ages.

He is most often remembered for his *Farewell Sermon* to the Pilgrims in which there is the often quoted line now inscribed in his church at Plymouth: *"The Lord hath*

more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy Word." He then regretted the stagnation of the Reformed Churches, caused, he believed, by their unwillingness to advance beyond the point reached by their founders. "You see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them; a misery much to be lamented; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God hath not revealed his whole will to them. . . . It is not possible that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."

Assuredly this is liberalism and might be paraphrased into that expression of faith used in many of our churches relative to The Progress of Mankind Onward and Upward Forever. Moreover, the expression of this conviction of Robinson's is not limited to his *Farewell Sermon* but appears in his *Essays* as well. Here he laments the state of mind of leaders who were

> accounting it not only needless curiosity, but even intolerable arrogancy, to call into question the things received by them from tradition. But how much better were it for all men to lay aside these and the like prejudices, that so they might understand the things which concern their peace, and seeing with their own eyes, might live by their own faith!

The standard for estimating a man's religion should not be his connection with any church, for "A man hath, in truth, so much religion, as he hath between the Lord, and himself, in secret, and no more, what shows soever he makes before men." But there is a strain of the practical in Robinson, which was to appear later in our philosophy relative to the service of man. As he expressed it, God does not regard that "church, and chamber religion towards him, which is not accompanied, in the house, and streets,

with loving-kindness, and mercy and all goodness towards men."

He sadly comments that in his day they who plead for toleration in matters of religion are those in the minority: Protestants living in Catholic countries and Catholic in Protestant. No group is so truly Christian that it does not contain some who are plainly anti-Christian nor hardly any so anti-Christian but that within it there are those with the spirit of Christ in their persons, and "so true members of his mystical body. With whom to deal rigorously for some few aberrations of ignorance, or infirmity, were more to please Christ's enemy than Christ." The fairer and friendlier attitude of the Plymouth Colony towards contrary opinion and practice in religious matters is proof conclusive of the skill with which this great leader sowed this then radical thought.

Robinson's *Essays* repeatedly show his tendency to take large views of life and to consider all sides of a question. One instance of this is the rule he lays down for judging the value of a man's life and work. "We are not, therefore, to measure a person's state by some one, or few acts, done, as it were, by the way, and upon instance of some strong temptation, but according to the tenor, and course of his life. Else, what wise man should not be a fool also? Or what fool should not be a wise man?"

John Robinson never saw America, but his spirit came when the Pilgrims landed. Their story needs no retelling and as we remember the courage and devotion with which they laid the cornerstone of a free church and a free society we meet the proof of the significance of his life. Today the love we bear for democracy and its freedoms is a memorial to the great Pilgrim minister, and that that memorial

shall be imperishable may we also remember a great truth that he spoke: "It is the first duty of man to inform his conscience aright: and then to follow the direction that it gives."

2. THE MAN WHO TAUGHT THE PILGRIMS

BY J. ELLSWORTH KALAS

WHEN THE CUSTOMARY TRIBUTES are paid the Pilgrims, it is to be hoped that someone will remember to say a word for the man who could justifiably be called the greatest of them all — John Robinson. Yet that may be too much to hope for. For after all, John Robinson never actually reached the shores of America. In fact, he never even embarked. So in the strict sense he is probably not a Pilgrim. And since he never came to the New World, most American history books have chosen to ignore him.

But the America of our day owes John Robinson a tremendous debt. Our America, where some 250 denominations manage to get along next door to one another, and even talk occasionally of coming together into some sort of co-operative fellowship, might conceivably not know this tolerant broad-mindedness had it not been for John Robinson. And our America, which currently worries over McCollum cases, Barden bills and the wall between church and state, might not enjoy such religious freedom had

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some other man — say Francis Johnson — served as pastor of the Leyden church.

James Truslow Adams declared that in the principle of tolerance, John Robinson was as far ahead of the English Puritans as Roger Williams was ahead of the Massachusetts Puritans. Of course that might only prove that Adams carried no brief for the Puritans. But the case for his statement is strong. John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrims, was an extraordinary man.

No one is quite sure, but it is generally believed that Robinson was born about 1575 in Gainsborough-upon-Trent, Lincolnshire. In 1592 he entered Corpus Christi (Benet) College, Cambridge, where Puritanism was already getting a toehold. Perhaps it was for this reason that Robinson chose Cambridge over Oxford, since his family are believed to have been dissenters.

Robinson must have made a good record during his seven years at Corpus Christi, for he received one of the school's twelve fellowships at the completion of the term. It is likely that he began his ministry shortly after at Norwich as a Church of England clergyman. But some time in 1604 he broke from the established church, feeling that his place was with the Separatists. Gradually he became associated with the group meeting in William Brewster's house in Scrooby, joining with that company in their migration to Holland in 1607-8.

Ministry at Leyden

The Scrooby group finally settled in Leyden, where Robinson remained until his death in 1625. As the seat of a university, Leyden was embroiled in a discussion be-

tween Arminians and Calvinists; and although John Robinson was a hearty Calvinist, Bradford notes that he "heard ye one as well as ye other." That was an exceedingly broad-minded act for the early seventeenth century.

Robinson's spirit continued to mellow through the years at Leyden, as his writings indicate. By the time of his death he had become so endeared to the whole community that some of the leading Hollanders felt "that all the churches of Christ sustained a loss by the death of that worthy Instrument of the Gospel." Even that most violent enemy of Puritans and Separatists, Baillie, hailed him as the most polished, learned and modest spirit of the lot.

But Robinson's fellow Separatists at Amsterdam did not look upon his liberalism so kindly. The Amsterdam Separatists considered the Leyden group fence-sitters because of Robinson's increasingly charitable attitude toward other sects, and finally disposed of them as "ignorant idiots, noddy Nabalites, dogged Doegs, fairfaced Pharisees, shameless Shimeites, malicious Machiavellians." After we recover from the assault of this astounding alliteration, we can deduce that the Amsterdam folk didn't exactly approve of John Robinson.

Preparing for America

When the Leyden group decided to migrate to America, Robinson was all for going with them. But it developed that a larger share of his rapidly growing church would remain in Holland at this time, so it was decided that his responsibility lay with the larger group.

It was at the time of the Pilgrims' departure for America

that Robinson made his most significant and controversial remarks about tolerance and religious liberty. These remarks may have been included in his farewell sermon of Thursday, July 20, 1620, based on Ezra 8:21, or perhaps they were a part of the "Christian discourse" he delivered in Delftshaven the evening before the *Speedwell* sailed. They were recalled twenty-six years later by Edward Winslow in his book *Hypocrisie Unmasked.* Winslow had been a member of Robinson's church for three years before departing for America.

> . . . amongst other wholesome Instructions and Exhortations [said Winslow] hee used these expressions, or to the same purpose; We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again: but whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed Angels, so to follow him no further than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his Ministery. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to breake forth out of his holy Word.

Robinson then dwelt at some length on the state of the reformed churches, and particularly on the Lutherans and Calvinists, who, he felt, "were come to a period in Religion, and would goe no further than the instruments of their Reformation." He bewailed the fact that these groups would "rather die" than go a step beyond what their founders had taught. This was especially grievous to Robinson since he felt that Luther and Calvin, "precious shining lights in their times," had not received God's whole truth. "And if they were now living," Robinson reasoned, "they would bee as ready and willing to em-

brace further light, as that they had received." Winslow's account continues:

> Here also he put us in mind of our Church Covenant (at least that part of it) whereby wee promise and covenant with God and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written Word: but withall exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine before we received it; For, saith he, *It is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick Antichristian darknesse, and that full perfection of knowledge should breake forth at once.*

Robinson also urged his hearers to rid themselves of the name "Brownists," "a meer nick-name and brand to make Religion odious." Further, he suggested that they take with them some godly minister, even if he were not a Separatist — which would have been nothing short of heresy to Francis Johnson's group at Amsterdam.

> And so advised us by all meanes to endeavour to close with the godly party of the Kingdome of *England,* and rather to study union than division; *viz.* how neare we might possibly, without sin close with them, then in the least measure to affect division or separation from them. And be not loath to take another Pastor or Teacher, saith hee, for that flock that hath two shepheards is not indangered, but secured by it.

Such a philosophy was almost unheard-of in that day, and many scholars have found it hard to accept this farewell speech of John Robinson's as fully authentic, particularly since it was not recorded by Winslow until a quarter of a century later. But if one reads Robinson's other works one will not find it hard to accept these words as authentic.

Separation of Church and State

Gradually Robinson began to call for the separation of church and state, insisting that "magistrates are kings and lords over men properly and directly, as they are their subjects, and not as they are Christ's." Then he appealed for "civil tolerance of error," urging that the state should not adjudicate in questions of doctrine or heresy. In his seventh essay, he argued that the state should not enforce church attendance,

> considering that neither God is pleased with unwilling worshippers, nor Christian societies bettered nor the persons themselves neither, but the plain contrary in all three. . . . by this cause of compulsion many become atheists, hypocrites, and familists, and being at first constrained to practise against conscience, lose all conscience afterwards. Bags and vessels overstrained break, and will never after hold anything.

When the Leyden group prepared to leave for the New World, Robinson composed a letter of final instructions for them. Among other things, he called again for the separation of church and state. It was to their best interest, he felt, that they become "a body politik, using amongst your selves civill governments." If the *Mayflower* group had been entirely Pilgrim, such a statement might have meant nothing more than a subtle call for a Separatist theocracy. But only 17 of the 41 men who signed the *Mayflower* Compact were Separatists. A "civil government" could well be the death warrant for the New World Separatist church.

Nevertheless, the Leyden men were faithful to the counsel of their pastor. When the *Mayflower* Compact was

written, it included in the opening paragraph the declaration that they were combining themselves into a "civil body politic."

Praise Due to Robinson

History has a great deal to say about the heroic way the Pilgrims withstood the first winter at Plymouth. Their unity and loyalty have been praised for three hundred years. It seems entirely fair now to pass on part of this praise to John Robinson. And we might ask, as some discerning historians have done, what would have happened at Plymouth if it had been settled by the cantankerous, divisive Amsterdam Separatists rather than by the followers of Robinson.

It was eight years after the Pilgrims landed that Higginson led a group of Puritans to Salem, only a few miles from Plymouth. In England the Puritans hated the Separatists even more — if possible — than they hated the Church of England, and Higginson's remarks upon departing from England indicated that he was ready for a pitched battle with the Pilgrims as soon as he hit the American beachhead. But the Pilgrims displayed the spirit of their beloved pastor (by this time deceased) in welcoming the Puritans, and Higginson responded with remarkable good feeling. In fact, he proceeded very shortly to set up his church on the pattern displayed by the Plymouth Pilgrims.

When the Quakers became numerous and obnoxious a little later in the seventeenth century, a rash of persecution broke out in New England. It is not a very pretty chapter in American history, yet by contrast it adds a few more laurels to John Robinson. For according to Cotton's *Ac-*

count of the Plymouth Church, the Pilgrims "never made any sanguinary or capital laws against that sect as some of the colonies did." Evidently Robinson's two colleagues, William Brewster and William Bradford, had faithfully carried on their pastor's teachings. And when persecution erupted in the area where Isaac Robinson, Pastor John's son, had settled, young Robinson allowed himself to be disfranchised rather than be a party to persecution.

III

The Pilgrims and Early Plymouth

BY HENRY W. ROYAL

CALVIN COOLIDGE, in one of his rare poetic moments, said of the Pilgrims, "They came not merely from the shores of the Old World. It will be in vain to search among recorded maps and history for their origin. They sailed up out of the infinite."

Arthur Lord, speaking along the same lines but in less poetic language, said of the Pilgrim movement, "Looking at it broadly it was part of a great world movement and its relation to that movement must be considered in order to understand its meaning and appreciate its results."

The New World, separated as it was from the other by a waste of ocean, made it possible to break old traditions, revise old institutions, and to think out a new philosophy to fit an infant society.

The religious movement which was taking shape in England at the time was the natural and almost inevitable result of the translation of the Bible into English and its publication for general circulation. The Genevan version,

Reprinted from a publication of the Pilgrim Society (Plymouth, Massachusetts).

printed in 1557-60, was the one commonly used by the Pilgrims.

These were the conditions which profoundly influenced the Pilgrims of Scrooby, Leyden, and Plymouth.

The Puritan body first took form in 1564. The Puritans did not differ from the essential doctrines of the Established Church. They objected to many of its forms and ceremonies, but they were "ever in and of the Church." The Pilgrims were a part of this movement but they were *not* Puritans, although much time has been spent in arguing that they were. As in the case of the Puritans, their fundamental principles differed very little from those of the Established Church, although in church government and in the personal relationship which they believed to exist between God and man they were far apart. They interpreted literally the passage of Scripture which says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." They questioned the spiritual authority of the bishops and claimed the right of any group to worship as it saw fit, with nothing to hamper freedom in religious thought or worship. The term "Separatists," which was sometimes applied to them, describes them with sufficient accuracy.

The laws of England at the time provided for imprisonment without bail for those who obstinately refused to attend Church services or were present at any unlawful assemblies contrary to the laws and statutes, with the further penalties that the convicted offender, if he did not conform within three months, should depart from the realm. If he refused to do so he should be deemed a felon, and the penalty was death without benefit of clergy.

The little church which had gathered at Scrooby, having

no hope of living peacefully in their own land under these conditions, determined to cross to Holland, where there was religious freedom for all. Again they ran into trouble as it was impossible, under the existing law, for a family to migrate without license from the authorities, and this license they were unable to obtain. To remain or to go was equally perilous, and their only hope was to get away secretly. In October, 1607, they made their first attempt to sail to Boston, in a ship which they had chartered, but they were seized, searched and imprisoned. After a month most of them were released, but seven of the principal men were held for the higher court.

The next year they arranged for a Dutch ship to meet them at a port near Grimsby, but here again they were seized by the sheriff and his men. Those of you who attended the pageant in 1921 will perhaps remember that this was one of the scenes represented, and you saw the sheriff and his horsemen herd together the women and children and march them away.

After this there seems to have been no mass effort to get across to Holland, but after many difficulties all got over, some at one time and some at another. After a short stay in Amsterdam they decided to make their way to Leyden. From 1609 to 1620 they made their home in that "fair and beautiful city," where, as Bradford describes it, "They made a competent and comfortable living, but with hard and continuous labor." Brewster became a printer and Robinson entered the famous University. The other members of the company engaged in different occupations and the years passed peacefully. They found in Holland that "freedom of religion" which they had sought and for which they had left their English homes, but as the slow years

passed there were many factors which made them consider seriously the question of removal from Holland. They longed for the protection of the English flag; they were losing the English language and their English names; they missed for their children the education which they had received in their English homes; and lastly as Bradford says, "They were inspired with a great hope and inward zeal for the propagation of the gospel in the remote parts of the world, a mighty work in which they might be the stepping-stones for those who might follow in the paths where they had led."

After careful consideration they decided that Virginia offered the best opportunities. Because of their separation from the Established Church, the King was unwilling to give them permission to live in America under his protection and enjoy liberty of conscience. He was ready however to agree not to molest them, and under this arrangement they obtained a patent from the Virginia Company. The patent having been obtained, it was necessary to secure financial aid and this was obtained from a group of London merchants, known as the Adventurers, who furnished the necessary capital. The details of this agreement are not material to this brief summary, but the contract was on the whole a burdensome one and became more so as the little colony built its houses along the first street. Under the arrangement it was provided that for seven years the income of the colony should go into a common fund, and from this fund the colonists should get their living. At the end of the period the original investment and the accumulated capital should be divided between the Adventurers and the colonists — but more of this later.

On August 1, 1620, the members of the Pilgrim Com-

pany sailed from Delfthaven for Southampton, and two weeks later the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell* left Southampton Water for the New World. Before they were out of the English Channel the *Speedwell* began to leak and it was necessary to run into Dartmouth for repairs. On September 2 they made their second start, but trouble developed again and the *Speedwell* was leaking so badly that both ships had to return to England, this time to Plymouth. Here it was found necessary to reorganize the expedition; the *Speedwell* was left behind and some of her passengers were taken on the *Mayflower* while others were left in England. On the 16th of September the *Mayflower* sailed again;

> "Then, the sea's wide blue! ——
> 'They sailed,' writ one, 'and as they sailed they knew
> That they were Pilgrims.' "

Nearly ten weeks later they came to anchor in Cape Cod harbor after a voyage that was filled with hardship and perils. Not all the passengers on the *Mayflower* were members of the Leyden congregation; the efforts of the Merchant Adventurers, the love of adventure, and the hope of gain had brought together many strangers and there were mutterings of discontent from these strangers. When the Cape was sighted it was decided to sail south and find some place near the Hudson River for their permanent home. Before the day was over, however, they found themselves among dangerous shoals and roaring breakers and they decided to turn back. The abandonment of their plan to settle within the limits of their patent led to open declarations from the malcontents that when the voyage had ended and a landing had been made outside the limits

of their patent there would be no authority to restrain their liberty. It became evident, therefore, that some practical means must be devised at once to maintain law, order, and discipline. To accomplish this the members of the Pilgrim Company met in the cabin of the *Mayflower,* off the shores of Cape Cod, on November 11, 1620 (O.S.), and bound themselves together by that famous document known later as the *Mayflower Compact.*

This is the substance of the *Compact:* For the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and honor of their King and Country, they came to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; they combined themselves into a civil body politic, for their better ordering and preservation, and by virtue thereof to enact such just and equal laws as should be thought most meet and convenient for the good of the Colony; and unto these laws they promised all due submission and obedience. This action can be seen in its true perspective only when we recall that at the time the *Compact* was framed, in no part of the world did there exist a government of just and equal laws.

They promised obedience to the laws, for they realized that the consent of the governed is one of the essentials of a just government. This was to be proclaimed more than a hundred and fifty years later in the Declaration of Independence, as a self-evident truth, that all governments must derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed."

On June 1, 1621, the Pilgrims obtained a new patent from the Council for New England, and the usefulness of the *Compact,* except as a symbol, came to an end. The elementary principles which it proclaimed, however, fore-

shadowed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, and our composite nation of today is interwoven with the ideals of that band of Pilgrims who founded their little community at Plymouth in 1620. We overlook too often the great contribution which they made to civil liberty and democracy. They knew how to found a colony for free men; earlier English attempts at colonization had ended in disaster; it remained for religious enthusiasm and civic ideals to triumph where commercial enterprise and the spirit of adventure had failed.

The *Mayflower* arrived in Cape Cod harbor on November 21, 1620, and the landing at Plymouth of the exploring party in the shallop was exactly one month later. This party of eighteen men had left the ship on December 16 to coast along the shores of Cape Cod bay. They ran into rain, snow and increasing winds; their mast was carried away and they were obliged to take to their oars. In the darkness of the December night they landed on what is now Clark's Island. The next morning was fair and in the warmth of the December sun they dried their clothes, rested themselves, and gave thanks to God for His mercies, in their manifold deliverances. "And this being the last day of ye weeke," wrote Bradford, "they prepared ther to keepe ye Sabath." Of that Sabbath, their historian wrote simply yet eloquently: "On the Sabboth day wee rested." Much has been said about the observance of that famous Sunday, but the two quotations given above comprise all that is known about it.

On Monday they sounded the harbor and found it fit for shipping; they marched into the land and found divers cornfields and little running brooks — a place (as they

supposed) fit for situation. "At least," as Bradford put it quaintly, "it was the best they could find." It was this landing of the exploring party, on the 21st of December, 1620, which has come down in history as the Landing of the Pilgrims. Of it the poet wrote,

> Here on its Rock and on its sterile soil,
> Began the kingdom not of kings but men;
> Began the making of the world again.

He looked upon the event as part of a world movement and not merely as the struggle of a little band of wanderers to make a home for themselves in the wilderness.

The exploring party returned to the ship and on December 26 the *Mayflower* and her passengers reached Plymouth. Several days were spent in exploring the region, and on Saturday, January 2 the work of building the town was actually begun. The town was to consist of a single street running from the water to Fort Hill. This street was called The Street, and was later known as First Street, Great Street, and Broad Street. It was not until 1823 that it became known as Leyden Street.

The first building erected was one twenty feet square, for common use until single houses could be built, but the work proceeded slowly. The weather was bad and sickness was common. Many of the party remained on the ship, and it was not until the last of March that the ship's carpenter could repair the shallop "to fetch all from aboard."

In April the *Mayflower* sailed for home, leaving the little band behind. A more discouraging situation could hardly be imagined. Half their number had died during the winter; their connection with the old world was

severed, and the most they could hope was that another ship would come before the next winter. But whether the Adventurers would be able to furnish and equip such a ship they did not know. To a degree which can scarcely be overestimated the future of the New World depended upon the courage, fortitude and faith of that little group of men, women, and children.

It is not my intention to dwell upon the happenings in the colony during the years of its slow growth. They were years of hardship, uncertainty and peril, and in those years the names of Bradford, Brewster, Standish and Winslow stand out. It was their ability, their heroic devotion to duty as they saw it, and their sublime faith, which made the colony a success.

In the story of the Pilgrims and their dealings with the Indians, two names occur frequently — Samoset and Squanto. Samoset was an Indian from the Maine coast, where he had learned a few English words from the fishermen. Squanto had been carried to Europe by Hunt and had lived in London several years. John Slanie, a London merchant, had taken an interest in him and sent him back to this country by way of Newfoundland. Whether you call it a coincidence, or regard it, as the pious annalist did, a marvelous interposition of a wonder-working Providence, the presence of these friendly English-speaking Indians is one of the most remarkable events in history. It was through these friendly Indians that the Pilgrims got in touch with Massasoit and made the treaty which may well be regarded as one of the landmarks in the colony's history. The scene has been described in detail by a writer of the period.

April 1, 1621, was a sunny day, and just after noon there

was great excitement in the colony; Massasoit, grand sachem of the confederated tribes of Pokanoket, appeared on Watson's hill with a band of sixty warriors. The situation was a serious one; if friendly relations could not be established with the Indians the colony would be in great and constant danger. The colonists were unwilling to let the governor venture among the savages, and the latter naturally hesitated about letting their chief visit the armed settlement. The mission required bravery and skill, as there was yet no security against bad faith on the part of the Indians. Winslow was selected to make contact with the chief, and the historian relates how he set out alone for the camp, wearing his armor and side-arms. He marched down the slope, across the ford, and advanced boldly up the hill. His companions did not see him again for several hours. On being conducted to Massasoit he presented him with a pair of knives and a copper chain with a jewel attached. To the chief's brother he gave a pot of strong water, a quantity of biscuits and some butter. The chief then expressed a wish to buy Winslow's sword. After that Winslow made a speech, saying that King James saluted the Indian ruler with peace and love, accepting him as a friend and ally and that the governor wished to see him "to confirm a peace with him" and open a trade for their mutual advantage. The interpreter did not succeed very well with the message but Massasoit grasped the substance of it and was much pleased.

Leaving Winslow behind as a hostage, and taking some twenty warriors as a guard of honor, the chief started for the village. Captain Standish and Master Allerton, with guard of six musketeers, met him at the crossing on Town Brook. As he crossed, the guard saluted him and the two

leaders took their places, one on each side of him, and conducted him to The Street, where, in a house not yet finished, there had been placed a green rug and some cushions. Governor Carver, assuming some state, came at once with a small body of musketeers, attended by drum and trumpets. After grave salutations had been exchanged they joined in some strong drink, of which, the historian says, "Massasoit drunk a great draft that made him sweat all the time after."

Then and there they made the treaty which established peace and friendship with the Indians and which lasted more than forty years. Massasoit outlived Carver, Bradford, Winslow, Brewster, Standish and Allerton, yet had been many years in his grave before the treaty was violated by his younger son.

When the treaty had been concluded the Governor escorted the returning Indians to the brook, and as the evening shadows lengthened Winslow returned.

One of the lessons we may learn from the Pilgrims is the lesson of the adequate preparations which they made for the safety of the little town. As early as 1622 a fort was built on the hill, of stout timber, with a flat roof on which their ordnance was mounted and from which they kept constant watch. Not only was a fort built but the town was surrounded by a palisade. As Secretary Morton wrote, "It was a great work for them to do in their weakness and in time of want, but the danger of the time required it."

The thoroughness of their preparations, the compulsory training in the use of military arms, and the law under which every man was required to equip himself with a musket and ammunition, offer a sufficient explanation why

they escaped the peril of Indian attacks. Both treaty and preparedness were necessary, and "useless each without the other."

It is interesting to note that no hostile shot was ever fired from the guns of the fort.

It has been said of some of our modern ideas, that the Pilgrims tried them three hundred years ago and they would not work. Their experience with communism was an interesting one and we of today can learn much from it. In the agreement with the London merchants there was inserted a provision to which I have already referred; for the first seven years the total income of the colony was to be put into a common fund and out of this the colonists were to get their living. At the end of seven years the capital and profits were to be divided between the Adventurers and the colonists.

But the plan was a failure from the first; one man thought that he did more than another and was not satisfied that he did not get more out of it; the young men thought that they did more than the old men and should get more pay; the old men thought it beneath their dignity that the young men got as much as they did; and the single men did not like the idea as it seemed to them that they were helping to support the families of the married men. At the end of three years conditions were so unsatisfactory that it was decided to modify the plan and give each man his land for present use but not for inheritance. The Governor notes that this made everyone much more industrious. The men planted much more corn than they would have done otherwise. Even the women went into the fields and worked, although before this they had alleged weakness.

The experience that was had in this comone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, [wrote Governor Bradford] may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Platos & other ancients, applauded by some of later times: — that the taking away of propertie and bringing in comunitie into a comone wealth would make them happy and florishing, as if they were wiser than God.

If communism did not succeed on Leyden street three hundred years ago, in a little community speaking the same language, with a common history and tradition, where their very existence depended upon the success of the plan, we may well wonder whether it would succeed under the vastly more difficult and complicated conditions of today.

This is briefly the story of the beginning of the Plymouth Colony. In 1692 it became a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and ceased to exist as an independent unit. But the part that it took in the founding of the nation has never been forgotten. Plymouth Rock, as a symbol, is known to every schoolboy in the land.

Plymouth Rock does not mark a beginning or an end. It marks a revelation of that which is without beginning and without end — a purpose shining through eternity with a resplendent light, undimmed even by the imperfections of men, and a response, an answering purpose, from those who, oblivious of all else, sailed hither seeking only an avenue for the immortal soul.

IV

The Pilgrims' Church in Plymouth

BY ARTHUR LORD

THE STORY OF THE FIRST CHURCH in the country is mainly to be gathered from the ancient records of the church. The history of the Pilgrims' separation from the church of their fathers in England, of the bitter persecutions to which they were subjected in their English homes, of their departure into Holland, of their life for twelve years in Leyden, of the reasons which led them to encounter the perils of the sea and seek a new home on unknown shores, of their protracted and tempestuous voyage, and their arrival at Cape Cod, written by William Bradford, the Governor, was entered in full in those records by Nathaniel Morton, who, from 1645 until his death in 1685, was Secretary of Plymouth Colony. Until the discovery of the manuscript of Bradford's *History* in the library of the Bishop of London at Fulham, of which the church records give only a part, those records were first in authority and interest of the chronicles of the Pilgrims.

Morton also copied into the church records the Dialogue

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written by Governor Bradford, entitled, "A dialogue or the sum of a conference between some young men born in New England and sundry ancient men that came out of Holland and old England, (written) Anno Domini 1648." The first request of the young men in the Dialogue is to know the minds of the ancient men "concerning the true and simple meaning of those of The Separation, as they are termed, when they say the Church of England is no Church or no true Church."

The first volume also contains the interesting and beautiful memoir of William Brewster, the first ruling elder of Plymouth Church, written by Governor Bradford and copied into the records by Morton.

Following the pages in the handwriting of Morton, now faded and difficult to decipher, are the pages in the handwriting of John Cotton, son of that famous John Cotton, minister of the First Church in Boston. Mr. Cotton was ordained as minister in Plymouth, June 30, 1669, having come to Plymouth with his family in November, 1667. His pastorate continued until October, 1697, and from his time until the present the records of church or parish are continuous.

Next in importance to these church and parish records is "An Account of the Church of Christ in Plymouth, the first church in New England, from its establishment to the present Day," written by John Cotton, a member of the church, in 1760, and first printed as an appendix to the sermon preached at the ordination of Rev. Chandler Robbins as minister of the church, in January, 1760, and later published in the fourth volume of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, in 1795.

In the simplicity of its style and the felicity of its expres-

sion the history of William Bradford stands easily first in the contemporaneous accounts of the beginnings of a nation, and may well serve as a model for future historians.

The interesting account by Cotton of the ecclesiastical history of Plymouth is of great value to all who seek to know of the history, practice and government of the First Church, and all subsequent accounts of the church have been largely drawn from those two sources.

In the first two years of the seventeenth century there separated from the churches of Scrooby, Austerfield, and Bawtry and the neighboring towns the men and women whom later generations called the Pilgrim Fathers. At first they worshipped in the old manor house on the great Northern road, which was the home of William Brewster, the first ruling elder in the colony of Plymouth. Brewster had studied at the University of Cambridge; he had been the confidential secretary of Davison when he was Secretary of State and when as ambassador of Elizabeth he had visited the Netherlands; and when Davison was put into the Tower after the execution of Mary Stuart, Brewster came to the manor house of Scrooby and held the position of "post" or postmaster therein. On successive Sundays there came to his house the Separatists or Independents of those towns, to listen to the preaching of John Robinson, their pastor. The little congregation that gathered there had separated from the churches where they and their fathers before them had worshipped. They were not non-conformists merely, as the Puritans were; for the Separatists first held that the Church of England was no church, and that it were better that the people should have no fellowship with it. The Puritan non-conformists were still members of the church, objecting to some of its forms, ceremonies

and usages. The persecutions to which the former were subjected in England made their separatism at first rigid; only when the memory of the persecutions had somewhat faded and the kindlier teachings of Robinson in the pleasant city of Leyden had influenced them, and their love of England had grown more intense as the years went by, did that separatism soften, until they were ready to concede that the church with all its faults was a real church of Christ, but that it was better for them to be out of it and keep out of it. At the time of their embarkation from Leyden, both Robinson and Brewster in a letter to London expressed the willingness of the Pilgrim company to take the oath of supremacy and recognize the king as the supreme head of the Church of England, and also to take the oath of allegiance, which was an oath of subjection and obedience to the king as a temporal sovereign independent of every other power.

The story of their life in England and in Holland is simply and finely told by the historian of the colony, Governor Bradford, and was copied into the first volume of the church records in Plymouth by his nephew, Nathaniel Morton, in 1680, when twelve of the one hundred and two who came in the *Mayflower* were still living. Morton's preface to the church records, dated Jan. 13, 1680, begins:

> I have looked at it as a duty incumbent on me to put to writing the first beginnings and after progress of the church of Christ in New England.

The persecutions by Church and State in England increased so that "their former afflictions were but as mole hills to mountains" in comparison with those which came upon them, until finding it impossible to endure them

longer they resolved to get over into Holland. After great difficulties and sufferings they left England during the years 1607 and 1608, and came first to Amsterdam. After remaining there a year, they removed to Leyden, "a fair and beautiful city and of a sweet situation."

The different view which the Massachusetts Puritans entertained of their departure from England from that which they believed the Pilgrims held is stated by Francis Higginson, the pastor of the first church of the Massachusetts Bay at Salem, in the words which he addresses to his congregation on board the ship which was bearing them from England, in May, 1629:

> We will not say as the Separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, Farewell Babylon! Farewell Rome! But we will say, Farewell, dear England. Farewell the church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there. We do not go to New England as Separatists from the church of England, though we cannot but separate from the corruptions in it; but we go to practice the positive part of church reformations and propagate the gospel in America.

The Pilgrim company left England under widely different circumstances and holding other views from the prosperous Puritan companies which later left England bound directly to the shores of Massachusetts Bay. By manual labor in various occupations the members of the congregation which left Scrooby and came to Leyden supported themselves for twelve years. The magistrates of the city said: "These English have lived among us now these twelve years, and yet we never had any suit or accusation against any of them." The leaders of the company in Leyden were Brewster and Robinson, both men of ability and learning, both admirably fitted to give wise counsels

and set high examples. Robinson is described by Bradford as

> a man learned and of solid judgment, and of a quick and sharp wit; so was he also a tender conscience and very sincere in all his ways, a hater of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and would be very plain with his best friends.

While of Brewster, Bradford writes:

> He was tender-hearted and compassionate of such as were in misery, but especially of such as had been of good estate and rank and were fallen into want and poverty, either for goodness or religion's sake, or by the injury and opression of others. In teaching he was very stirring and distinct in what he taught, by which means he became the more profitable to his hearers. He had a singular good gift in prayer, both public and private, in ripping up the heart and conscience before God, in the humble confession of sin and begging the mercies of God in Christ for the pardon thereof. He always thought it were better for ministers to pray oftener, and divide their prayers than to be long and tedious in the same, except upon solemn and special occasions, as in days of humiliation and the like.

The vigor of Robinson's intellect and his singular skill in debate so impressed itself upon the scholars of Leyden, that to him was intrusted the duty of public dispute with the most learned champion of the teachings of Arminius as opposed to those of Calvin. Bradford says: "He was terrible to the Arminians, and did foil his adversary and put him to an apparent non plus in this great and public audience."

But in spite of the success which Robinson and Brewster met with, one as a writer and the other as a printer of books, in Leyden, the life of the Pilgrim company there

was a hard and unsatisfactory one, and at last it was determined that they must leave Holland and found another home. They found that the hardness of the place was such that few came to them and fewer stayed; that old age began to come upon them, and their great and continual labors hastened it before their time; that their children bowed under their heavy burdens and became decrepit in their youth. They say that their children were exposed to great temptations, and feared that their posterity was liable to become degenerate and corrupt; and, which was not the least,—

> They had a great hope and inward zeal of laying some great foundations, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in these remote parts of the world, yet they should be but as stepping stones unto others for performing so good a work.

Another and important consideration which moved them was their desire to live under the protection of England and to retain the name and language of Englishmen. Their twelve years in Leyden had softened the bitterness which they felt toward the mother country at the time of their departure, and their experiences in Holland had revived their ancient loyalty, and had impressed upon them the firm conviction that English laws and manners and thought were better than those of any other nation.

When it was determined that the congregation should seek the new world, the question at once arose as to who should go and who should stay. It was decided that the youngest and strongest should go first, and that those only should go who volunteered. Of the leaders of those who went, Bradford was but thirty-two years of age, Edward

Winslow was twenty-five, and Brewster, who was to go with them as their ruling elder, was then fifty-six years of age. As the greater number of the Leyden congregation remained behind, it was determined that Robinson should stay with them; while the religious interests of those who were to sail in the *Mayflower* were intrusted to the keeping of William Brewster. Fortunate indeed was that congregation, that in the years in which it dwelt in a strange land among a strange people, it was taught and counselled and ministered unto and guided by such men as Robinson and Brewster; and thrice fortunate those who beyond a stormy sea and on an unknown shore, through doubt and peril and suffering and death were consoled and comforted and encouraged and sustained by the teachings of the pastor who sleeps beside the Rhine and who never saw the Pilgrims' land, and the presence of the elder who in sickness and in sorrow, in prosperity and in health, was their guide and adviser, their teacher and friend, and who, in his old age, passed away full of years and honor, loved and reverenced by the whole community he had served so long and so well. Sadly the Pilgrim company parted from those who were to remain in Holland, with mutual embraces and many tears; and the *Speedwell,* with a prosperous wind, sailed from the harbor of Delftshaven to the port of Southampton, where they found the *Mayflower* ready for her long and famous voyage.

"But they knew that they were Pilgrims and looked not on those things, but lifted up their eyes to Heaven, their dearest country and quieted their spirits."

The date of the departure of the *Speedwell* from Delftshaven or of the *Mayflower* from Plymouth may be looked upon, perhaps, as the date of the organization of the church

of Plymouth; for it was distinctly understood that those of the congregation of Leyden who went first were to be an "absolute church of themselves, as well as those who staid behind — with the proviso that as any go over or return they shall be reputed as members without further dismissal or testimonial."

It seems to have been intended that the Pilgrim company separating from the congregation at Leyden should form a distinct church. Such would be the more natural and the more practical course to adopt; and the fact that it was provided that the members of the congregation at Leyden who should afterwards go to the new world, and those of the *Mayflower* company who might afterwards return to Leyden, should be considered as in the one church or the other without formal letters or testimonials seems to indicate that, recognizing that by their action a new church had been formed, they intended to provide that letters of dismissal or testimonial should not be necessary as between the parent church in Leyden and the new church beyond the sea; fearing that if it were not so understood, questions might arise which could not be conveniently or easily settled as to the right to be admitted to the separate organization which those who might return would have.

They carried with them, so far as appears in the minute chronicle of Bradford, no written confession or declaration of faith or creed. They would doubtless have described themselves as Calvinists; but it was a Calvinism which was marked with a singular degree of liberality, much broader and more tolerant than that of the catechism and covenants of later days. Touching the ecclesiastical ministry they agreed with the French Reformed Churches.

Perhaps no better description of the doctrine and spirit which animated them can be found than that of the farewell counsel which the pastor Robinson addressed to those of his flock who were to leave his pastoral care. His parting words to the Pilgrims, as given by Winslow, were:

> We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again. But whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed angels to follow him no further than he followed Christ, and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his to be ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry, for he was very confident that the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed Churches who were come to a period in religion and would go no further than the instruments of their Reformation. As for example, the Lutherans they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther say; for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted or revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists they stick where he left them, — a misery much to be lamented; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them, and were they now living they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our church covenant, at least that part of it whereby we promise and covenant with God and one with another to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written word; but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth and well to examine and compare it and weigh it with other Scripture truth before we received it. For it is not possible that the Christian world should come out of such thick and uncommon darkness and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.

This covenant referred to in the passage which Winslow gives from Robinson, Bradford describes in the church records as a "covenant of the Lord by which they joined themselves while in England into a church society in the fellowship of the Gospel to walk in all his ways made known or to be made known unto them according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them."

It was not till 1676 that any covenant was entered into by the Plymouth Church. The occasion for the renewal of the covenant was the recommendation of the General Court in June of that year. The colony was then in the midst of King Philip's War. Alarmed by the condition of the colony, which was in great jeopardy from the severity and continuance of the war, the General Court assembled to take action in view of the critical state of affairs. In the first volume of the Records is found the following entry:

The General Court in June, being sensible of the heavy hand of God upon the country in the war with the heathen, appoint a day of Humiliation to be entered into the twenty-second day of June, and added thereto a solemne motion to all our chhs to renew a covenant engagement to God for revision of all provoking evils. The chh attended that day of prayer, and then the elders appointed a chh meeting to be on June twenty-ninth. The chh then all met and offered prayer for God's direction and blessing in so solemne a matter. A chh covenant was ready, and the chh voted that it should be left upon record as that which they did owne to be the substance of that covenant which their fathers entered into at the first gathering of the church, which was in these words following:

In the name of our lord Jesus Christ & in obedience to His holy will and divine ordinances:

We being by the most wise & good Providence of God brought together in this place — & desirous to unite ourselves into one congregation or church under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head — that it may be in such sort as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed & sanctified to himself. . . . We do hereby solemnly & religiously (as in his most holy presence) avouch the Lord Jehovah the only true God to be our God & doe promise & binde ourselves to walke in all our wayes, according to the Rule of the gospel — & in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinances — & in mutual love to, and watchfulness over one another — depending wholy & only upon the Lord our God to enable us by his grace hereunto.

This covenant and the letter of Robinson indicate the breadth of thought and toleration of expression which characterized the views of the early Pilgrims. The church government was purely congregational.

"The Papists place the rulling power in the pope, the Episcopalians in the bishop, the Puritans or Presbyterians in the presbytery. We put it in the body of the congregation, the multitude called the church."

The Pilgrims held that any competent number of persons, when their consciences obliged them, had a right to embody into a church for their mutual edification; when embodied into a church, they had a right to choose all their officers. The officers of that church were the pastor or teaching elders, who had the power of overseeing the teaching and administrating the sacraments; the ruling elders, who were to help the pastor in overseeing, and were qualified to teach occasionally in the pastor's absence or illness: the deacons, who took care of the church funds and distributed for the support of the pastor, the supply of the needy, the propagation of religion, and who ministered at the Lord's table.

The ruling elders of the Plymouth Church were three in all — and first in time and in prominence was William Brewster, who died in 1644. After his death, Thomas Cushman was chosen elder. He was the son of Robert Cushman, who came over in the *Fortune,* and was for many years the agent of the colony in England, and who preached in Plymouth, in 1621, the first sermon in New England which has been preserved, on the "Sin and Danger of Self Love," — which was printed in London in 1622, and of which many editions have been subsequently printed. Thomas Cushman continued as elder until his death in 1691, at the age of eighty-four. Cushman's successor as elder was Thomas Faunce, who was the last ruling elder of the church in Plymouth, and who died in the ninety-ninth year of his age, in 1745. To him we are indebted for the preservation of the Forefathers' Rock. In his ninety-sixth year, hearing that a wharf was to be erected over the Rock, he was carried from his home some three miles away to the shore, that he might bid the rock his last farewell. This was in 1741 that the Elder pointed out the Rock, which had been shown him by the survivors of the Pilgrim company in his youth as the spot on which the Pilgrims landed — which might well dispose of the speculations which recent writers have engaged in as to the true landing place of the Pilgrims.

The first meetings of the church were held in the common house, on the southerly side of Leyden street; but after the construction of the fort upon Burial Hill, the congregation met there. We have an interesting account of the town in its early days, of the fort and of the church, and a description of the Pilgrim company as they wended their way hither on successive Sundays, from the pen of

Isaac De Rasières, who was sent on an embassy by the Dutch West India Company at Manhattan to the colony at New Plymouth. In his letter to one of his employers he writes:

New Plymouth lies on a slope of the hill stretching east towards the sea coast, with a broad street of about a cannon short of eight hundred yards long heading down the hill, with a street crossing in the middle. The houses are constructed of hewn planks with gardens also enclosed behind and on the side with hewn planks, so that their houses and gardens are arranged in very good order, with a stockade against a sudden attack. At the ends of the streets there are three wooden gates. In the centre on the cross street stands the Governor's house, before which is a square enclosure upon which four paterros are mounted so as to flank along the streets. Upon the hill they have a large square house with a flat roof made of thick sawn planks set on oak beams, upon which they have six cannons which shoot iron balls of four and five pounds, commanding the surrounding country. The lower part they use for a church, where they preach on Sundays and the usual holidays. They assemble by beat of drum, each with his musket or firelock, in front of the captain's door; they have their cloaks on, and place themselves in order three abreast, and are led by a sergeant without beat of drum. Behind comes the Governor, in a long robe; beside him on the right hand comes the preacher with his cloak on, and on the left hand the captain with his side arms and cloak on, and with a small cane in his hand — and so they march in good order, and each sets his arms down near him. Thus they are constantly on their guard night and day.

In 1648, while the church was under the pastorate of the Rev. John Rayner, the first meeting-house was erected in Plymouth, upon which hung the first church bell. John Rayner was the second settled minister of the church. The first minister settled over the church was Ralph Smith,

who came to Salem in 1629, and soon after found his way to Plymouth, where he was ordained as the first pastor — "a grave man, but of low gifts and parts." In 1624 one John Lyford was sent over to be the pastor; but he was not accepted by the parish, and his unfortunate manners and troublous spirit and the belief that he was an enemy to the plantation caused his banishment from the colony.

Following Mr. Smith, the famous Roger Williams preached for a short time there, but he was never ordained over the church. He resided at Plymouth from 1631 to 1634, and is described in the records as "a young man of bright accomplishments, but of unstable parts." John Norton, who afterwards was the minister at Ipswich, and later the successor of Mr. Cotton in Boston, preached a winter at Plymouth in 1635. Rayner was ordained in 1636, as the second settled minister of the church:

> An able and a godly man of a meek and humble spirit, sound in the truth and every way unreprovable in his life and con versation, who after some time of trial they chose for their teacher, the fruit of whose labors they enjoyed many years with much comfort in peace and agreement.

In 1638 it was proposed to Charles Chauncy, afterwards President of Harvard College, to settle at Plymouth for three years; but he refused to become their ordained pastor, and left the church on account of the difference between him and the parish as to the method of baptism. The question was whether baptism should be by sprinkling or by immersion, Mr. Rayner and the church preferring the former as more convenient in this cold climate, while Mr. Chauncy stoutly insisted that the latter mode was the only true one. The church offered to let him practice

immersion to such as desired it, provided that he would consent to Mr. Rayner's administering the ordinance of baptism by sprinkling, as had heretofore been the custom. But, as Cotton quaintly states it, "he did not see light to comply, so that there was a necessity of parting." Mr. Chauncy went to Scituate, where he remained as a minister for some time, and later to Cambridge as president of the college.

In 1654 Mr. Rayner, to the great regret of the church and of the people, dissolved his connection with the church, and was succeeded as settled minister by John Cotton, Jr., "a man of strong parts and good abilities to preach the word of God," who was ordained pastor in 1669. Mr. Cotton remained at Plymouth until 1697, and brought many members into full communion with the church. The practice of the Plymouth Church at that time was for candidates who desired to be admitted to fellowship in the church, as distinguished from the parish, to make an "open confession of faith and a declaration of their experiences of the work of grace in the heart"; but under Cotton's ministry in 1688 it was agreed that:

> Such as were bashful and of low voice and not able to speak in public to the edification of the congregation, the elders might bring before the church in private, but voting for their admission should be before the congregation, they having been examined and heard by the elders in private and they stood propounded in public for two weeks. The relations of the women being written in private from their mouths were read in public by the pastor, and the elders gave testimony of the competency of their knowledge.

In November, 1669, the catechising of the children by the pastor, attended by the ruling elder, began. The cate-

chism then used was composed by the Rev. William Perkins, and some years afterwards the Assembly's catechism was adopted. The psalm book then in use was Ainsworth's translation; but the difficulty which the congregation experienced in singing some of the tunes to which the psalms were set led to the substitution of the New England psalm-book, which had long been in use in the other New England churches. Until 1681 it had been the practice to sing the psalms without first reading the line; and then, on the motion "of a brother who otherwise could not join in the ordinance I suppose because he could not read," says Cotton, they altered the custom and reading was introduced. The pastor first expounded the psalm and then the elder lined it off.

During Mr. Cotton's ministry the second church was built, in 1683, on land granted by the town, substantially on the present site. There exists at Plymouth a little picture of this church — an ancient pen and ink drawing in the possession of the family of the late William S. Russell, Esq., a devoted antiquarian and the author of the "Guide to Plymouth" and "Pilgrim Memorials."[1]

Following Mr. Cotton comes Ephraim Little, ordained as pastor in 1699. He died in 1723, and was the first settled minister of Plymouth whose body lies buried upon Burial Hill, the ancient burying ground adjoining the church. "He was a gentleman more inclined to the active than the studious life, of a good memory, a quick invention, having an excellent gift in prayer and in occasional performances also excelling."

From 1724 to 1756 Mr. Nathaniel Leonard was the

[1] In the Archives of Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, Mass. (Pilgrim Society).

settled minister. At his suggestion the church voted that the children be catechised by the deacons between meetings on the Sabbath, and to ask them four or five questions each Sabbath until they had learnt the catechism through. This was probably the beginning of the Sunday school system. From the sketch of his life in the church records, it appears that "He was of considerable natural abilities, of a clear head, solid judgment and penetrating thought, of a mild, pleasant, affable disposition, prudent, hospitable, generous, excelling in all the graces and duties of the Christian life." During the ministry of Mr. Leonard, in 1744, the parish built its third meeting-house, which stood substantially upon the same site.

The successor of Mr. Leonard was Chandler Robbins, ordained in 1760, and who died in 1799. He was a graduate of Yale College, and received the degree of D.D. from Dartmouth and Edinburgh. He was distinguished as a scholar whose writings were marked by their elegance, their piety and their learning; and during the trying period of the Revolution he was among the foremost of the patriot clergymen and rendered sufficient service in his advocacy of liberty and independence. In doctrine Dr. Robbins was distinctly Calvinistic, and at his instance the church adopted a Confession of Faith, in entire conformity with his ideas. Strict in all matters of church discipline and government, he did not hesitate to censure or even to excommunicate as the church might direct. But his amiable and courteous manners, his cheerful disposition, his cultivated tastes and undoubted interest in and love for his church and its members allayed or silenced any formal opposition to his doctrines, and prevented any division of the church or society. Upon his death the more

liberal views prevailed, and the church by a vote of twenty-three in the affirmative to fifteen not voting (in accordance with the custom of the church the negative vote not being taken), and the parish by a vote of two hundred and fifty-three to fifteen, invited Mr. James Kendall to become their pastor.

The legal effect of the action of church and parish in the early churches is deserving of notice. The church had no power to settle the minister; that power was vested wholly in the parish, of which the members of the church who were inhabitants of the town formed a part. The usage was, however, for the church to first make choice of a minister and request the concurrence of the parish; if the parish did not concur, then the contract of settlement was made wholly between the parish and the minister, and was binding on them and not the church. The settlement of a minister over a congregational church and parish, if made without any limitations as to its continuance or dissolution, was a contract for life, terminable only for three causes: an essential change of doctrine, a wilful neglect of duty, or immoral or criminal conduct.

Dr. Kendall was a graduate of Harvard College, and received the degree of D.D. from his college. His ordination took place on the first of January, 1800, and his connection with the society continued until his death in 1859. He will be remembered not only as the last settled minister of the whole town, except the precinct of Manomet Ponds, but also for the unfailing courtesy, fervent piety and deep interest in, and watchful care over, the people whom he served, which won and kept for him the love and respect of the whole community during his long pastorate of sixty years. With him were associated as

colleagues Rev. George W. Briggs, Henry L. Myrick, George S. Ball and Edward H. Hall. At his death Mr. Hall became the sole pastor of the church, and was succeeded by Rev. Frederick N. Knapp, Edmund Q. S. Osgood, and Charles P. Lombard, bringing the ministry down to the twentieth century.

During Dr. Kendall's ministry the fourth church was erected, in 1831. It was designed by George W. Brimmer, Esq., of Boston, and measured 71 feet by 60 feet in the body of the church. The front, which was four feet wider, had a tower projecting in the center 11½ feet, and rising 87 feet in height. Since the organization many churches have separated from the first church, some on account of distance and consequent inconvenience in regular attendance, some from differences in doctrine and belief. The churches of Duxbury, Marshfield, Eastham, Plympton, Kingston and Manomet Ponds, — the last known as the Second Precinct, — separated on account of their distance from the church, and the establishment of new towns where they were located. In 1744 the Third Church in Plymouth was organized, and continued as a separate organization until 1783, when under the ministry of Dr. Robbins the church congregation uniting with the first parish formed one church and parish. In 1801 the Third Congregational Society was organized, and is the seventh branch now existing from the parent stock. The Fourth Congregational Society was formed in 1814 from the first and third. These various separations from the First Church did not affect in any way the legal existence of the parish. They were organized as distinct parishes, and under the well-settled provisions of law had no claim upon the church property or name. The rule has been stated by

the supreme court to be that every town is considered to be a parish until a separate parish is found within it, and then the inhabitants not included in the separate parish constitute the first parish, and the property remains with the residue of the original parish, and is not in any way transferred or disturbed by a separation or change among its members or in the territorial limits.

Its three centuries of continued and distinct existence, its records and traditions and history alone, should ensure for the First Church of Plymouth a long future of honor and usefulness.

V

The Historical Pilgrim Church and the Modern Witness

BY GEORGE N. MARSHALL

THE "GODLY OLD MAID" OF PLYMOUTH, the First Parish and Church in America, is not only historically interesting from the point of view of its age, but because of the very human documents it has left behind over the span of years. It saw America grow from a wilderness settlement into a great continental power. It saw the industrial revolution and the rise of cities — it saw the colonial way give ground to the emerging democracy of the United States. It witnessed the Puritan theocracy and saw the autocracy of the church divines slowly replaced by a commonwealth of man. Its own progress was marked by the change from a fort meetinghouse to a village church, to a venerable mother of many churches, to a great modern church housed in a national memorial shrine. This shrine, contributed to by the American people, befits its unique position as a living Pilgrim memorial, as the mother of American Protestantism and as the oldest continuous organization of any kind in the North American hemisphere. It is the

grand matriarch of American churches, mother to a numerous brood; its rare joy has been to survive and see the distinctive and ample talents of its many children seeking in their own way to fulfill their functions.

There are many humorous stories collected over the years, some true and some apocryphal, that amuse the hearer and show the human foibles of a church to be that of its people.

Once, we are told, the minister was asked to pray for rain during a drought, and immediately his prayer for "just a little drizzle-drossle," was climaxed by a cloudburst and thunderstorm, which drove both minister and people to cover.

It is often related how one minister, fond of chastising members for bringing forth children on the Sabbath, due to the ancient theory that children are born at the same time as conception, was greatly embarrassed when his wife delivered him twins following the morning service at the hour the parish presumed he had retired for prayer.

The difficulty of the parsons to secure adequate recompense fills many a record. It was the minister's unfortunate lot to collect his own salary, although the rates were set by the parish. Roger Williams bewailed the fact that in Plymouth he had to labor "on the Land and water, and the Hoe and Oare, for bread." The town ordinance of 1658 gave all lumber rights on Clark's Island, the Gurnet, and Saquish to the minister of the First Parish, as an added aid. The lumber, of course, quickly gave out.

The motions in parish meeting on the part of people whose worship was interrupted by the odor of Indians sitting in the next pew was settled by allowing the com-

plainers to pay for building the new pews at the end of the church for the Indians.

The boys, who were assigned to the gallery of the meetinghouse in the seventeenth century, "larfed out loud" when their elders were pricked by the tithingman's rod for slumbering; the boys passed up and down the pews during the long services, sat during the prayer, and performed other "indecencies." The girls were nearly as bad. They giggled at the boys' "indecencies," and were caught making eyes at them in the meetinghouse.

A March, 1948 news item claimed that two nocturnal listeners heard a popular song being played on the chimes — the escapade of someone a little tipsy. The vagaries of "Parson Kendall's Rooster,"[1] sentinel of the meetinghouse weather vane, are well understood in light of the vast history and diverse events that went on beneath its jaunty eye.

The humorous and whimsical are only occasional facets of the somber and heroic history of the Pilgrim parish which has served as a source of strength to its people in every generation. It has stood a witness to much tragedy during its long existence. The death of one-half its members during that first fateful winter; the burning of the Common House after only one church service; the continual vigilance necessary during those early years when the men worshipped with cocked rifles at their knees. The church, then, was a fort — mounted not by a spire pointing to Almighty God, but by six cannons. As the years went by, the parish was to become weakened by the removal of many members to newer settlements; "And thus was this poore church left like an ancient mother,

[1] *See* Appendix A.

growne olde, and forsaken of her children . . . like a widow left only to trust in God," as Bradford wearily wrote in his *History of Plimouth Plantation.*

This same parish was to see a church hardly built struck by lightning. It was to raise thousands of dollars to repair the fourth meetinghouse, and in the week that the workmen finished, see the entire structure burn to the ground.

It was at various times to be torn by strife and dissension. One of the most notable times was during the American Revolution. Chandler Robbins, minister of the Church, and many of the parish were patriots and revolutionists. The Warrens distinguished themselves and all Plymouth on behalf of the continental side; the Winslows were prominent Tories. Tories were absent from church services because they claimed they "were treated with contempt"; a church meeting *did* vote "almost unanimously" to bar Tories from Communion. At this time the venerable Plymouth Rock was dragged to Town Square and placed in front of the church.

Chandler Robbins went off to war as a chaplain in the Continental Army. He was the first of an honorable list of ministers to serve the nation as chaplains. Dr. Kendall served in the war of 1812; Rev. Edward H. Hall served as chaplain of the 44th Regular Infantry in the Civil War; Rev. Arthur B. Whitney served the 28th Field Hospital Company as a Y.M.C.A. chaplain during World War I. All these men were given leaves of absence to serve in the field. During World War II Rev. Floyd J. Taylor served as a State Guard chaplain, and the Rev. George N. Marshall as a United States Army chaplain attached to the Army Air Forces, being called to the Plymouth pulpit while still in service.

There were theological grounds for strife in the church, although the Pilgrims were much more tolerant than most religious groups of their day. The liberalism of the Pilgrim Pastor, John Robinson, culminated in a broad tolerance. The Pilgrims of Plymouth were remarkable for their lack of witch-hunting, for their failure to follow the other New England colonies in the persecution of the Quakers, for their willingness to allow a difference of theological opinion to exist among the members of the church and even between the church and its ministers.

In 1656 the Pilgrim Church at Plymouth was chastised by the Massachusetts Bay colony for its lack of "a pious orthodox ministry . . . so that the flood of errour and principles of anarchy . . . will not long be kept out where Sathan and his instruments . . . prevail to the crying down of ministry and ministers. . . ."

In 1645 a petition was presented to the General Court to grant "full and free tolerance of religion to all men that will preserve the civil peace and submit unto the government." There was to be "no limitation or exception against Turk, Jew, Papist, Arian, Socinian, Nicolaitan, Familist, or any other." Although a majority of the deputies were in favor of the measure, Winslow, opposing it, was successful in having it shelved on the plea that he wished further time to study it. Willison[2] called this "a defeat of the liberals seeking toleration," which marked " a turning point in Pilgrim history. Always more tolerant, humane, and discerning than the Puritans, the Saints now began to trail them closely." The wonder is that the tiny Pilgrim colony of hundreds was able so long to

2 George F. Willison, *Saints and Strangers* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock), p. 362.

stand up against the Puritan sea of thousands. The First Church of the Pilgrims never wholly lost its more humane, tolerant and discerning insights, even though the colony came to be dominated, and in time absorbed, by the Puritan theocracy of Massachusetts Bay.

The Plymouth Church was served by Roger Williams from 1631 to 1634, when he resigned as "Teacher" to go to Salem, from whence he was subsequently banished by the Bay authorities. In Plymouth, Governor Bradford wrote, he was "well approoved, for ye benefite whereof I still blese God and am thankful to him, even for his sharpest admonitions & reproufs, so farr as they agreed with truth." Charles Chauncey served as "Teacher" in 1638, and although he "dipped" for baptism, the congregation was willing to retain him, so long as he would agree to allow those who preferred sprinkling to turn to other ministers for that function. Thus, once again, the First Church emphasized its broader toleration in matters of faith than the Puritans of the Bay Colony.

The pangs of the great revival of Jonathan Edwards, and the fervency of the Whitfield revival were also felt by the Plymouth Church. Here also occurred a separation over the issue of "the Half-way Covenant," as the "Third Congregational Society" withdrew by petition in 1744, and by petition reunited in 1784. Under the "Half-way Covenant" unconverted parishioners who had led blameless lives could join the church in order that their children might be baptized. Otherwise children whose parents could not testify to a conversion experience could not be baptized, and hence, "saved." In defense of this right to join as half-way members, the Third Society was formed, returning only after the First Church minister agreed with

their viewpoint, as former ministers prior to 1744 had done.

There were to be other separations and reunions. Six daughter churches had been formed prior to 1738 for geographical reasons, in Duxbury, Marshfield, etc. The sixth was in 1738 when the Second Church in Plymouth, located in the village of Manomet, withdrew. No doctrinal matter was involved. In 1800 the Rev. James Kendall began his remarkable fifty-nine-year ministry. He was called by some an Arminian. Certainly he promised a more liberal, tolerant and remarkably modern ministry to the church. When he died in 1859 he had so endeared himself to the town that every church and place of business closed for the day.

Three men who attended his ordaining council stated that they represented fifteen men of the church who objected to his ordination. The council, after hearing their complaint, voted to proceed to ordain Dr. Kendall because of his obvious qualifications.[3] Dr. Kendall's congregational good standing, in spite of his supposed "Arminianism," would suggest that the clash was more a personality than a definite doctrinal conflict. The Parish had previously voted to call him by the overwhelming vote of 253 in favor to 15 against; and the Church voted to call him by the majority of 23 in favor to 15 against.[4] On September 17, 1801, a petition was presented to the First Church signed by 53 members — 18 men and 35 women, asking to be dismissed from the church to form their own church, a dismissal which was unanimously voted. These three votes,

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[3] *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts,* Volume XXIII, "Plymouth Church Records 1620-1859," Part II (Boston), p. 542.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 538.

one of the parish and two of the church, were the only votes involving any discontent with Dr. Kendall, or the majority's decision. What was the total membership at the time? In 1797, Rev. Chandler Robbins had a list of 215 church members — 64 men and 151 women.[5] Eleven members from this list had been removed by death or dismissed previous to December, 1799.

It was customary at New England church meetings for only men to vote; women's suffrage had not yet reached the churches, let alone the government. This accounts for the smallness of the church vote above. Of 64 men members of the church, 48 had voted for or against Dr. Kendall, which is as good a percentage as usually turns out at a meeting.

These figures are interesting because it is sometimes claimed in church histories that these votes constitute one of the earliest conflicts in a colonial church over the Unitarian issue. It is likewise sometimes stated in church histories that the Plymouth vote was significant because both the church and parish voted the same way.

Full communion in a church was allowed only to those members who could testify to a conversion experience. Such conversions were strong emotional and spiritual compulsions, which many sober and God-fearing persons never had — to their own dismay. Half-way membership was open to those who were baptized and lived goodly lives, but who had not yet experienced a conversion. The parish membership was composed of all those who supported the church, for the parish was the business body politic that made possible the spiritual fellowship of a church. Thus the parish is much larger than those who subscribe to the

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 477.

covenant of the church. Hence the parish vote on the call of Dr. Kendall was much greater than the church vote. In many communities, the parish was less ecclesiastical and less orthodox than those who had joined the church. Thus it often happened, as in Dedham, that the parish voted for a liberal ministry, while the church voted for an orthodox ministry. The Plymouth vote of 1800 is often interpreted as being a choice of a liberal over an orthodox ministry. The outcome of the vote went counter to the general trend of divided sentiments between church and parish, because here church and parish voted the same. In the Dedham case, before the Massachusetts Supreme Court, Chief Justice Parker gave the decision which is to be found in Baker v. Fales, 16 Mass., 487. Its substance is that when the church and parish vote differently, the church title remains with the parish, even though only a minority of the church members remain with the majority of the parish; for a parish, being the custodian of a church, has no existence apart from the nurture and support of it. It is obvious that no such minority retained title to the First Church in Plymouth, for it was a substantial majority that voted for the ministry of Dr. Kendall in both church and parish, and a small minority that withdrew.

The ministry of Dr. Kendall marked no break with the past. The church continued in good fellowship with the orthodox churches with which it was accustomed to associate. The records show that on October 12, 1804, two Episcopalians, Joanna Winslow and Mary Warren, sought permission to be allowed to partake of Communion with the First Church inasmuch as there was no Episcopal church in Plymouth, and their request was cordially

granted. Thus for a number of years the Episcopalians in Plymouth partook of Communion, and probably otherwise worshiped with them, while remaining Episcopalians. It would seem that the bonds with orthodoxy had not been broken in 1800.

The name "Unitarian" does not enter the church records until 1828 when an invitation was received to participate in the installation of a Unitarian minister in New York City. In 1822 the First Universalist Society was organized in Plymouth. In 1823, on March 26, a reference is made to "a disaffected brother's introducing a subject of controversy — relative to the doctrine of the Trinity. . . ." This is the first reference to the Trinity in the church records. In 1825, the First and Third Churches combined in the establishment of the Fourth Church in Plymouth at Eel River (Chiltonville), and the First Church gave its old furniture to the new society. On Feb. 14, 1831, the "First Unitarian Society" was organized in Plymouth, completely separate from the First Church, and called as its minister Rev. James H. Bugbee, the Universalist minister, who served both churches.

On Jan. 1, 1838, the First Church voted unanimously to call Rev. George W. Briggs, then minister of the First Unitarian Society of Fall River, to be colleague minister with Dr. Kendall of the First Church. The parish did likewise. The separate First Unitarian Society in Plymouth had now ceased to exist; apparently 1838 marks the culmination of the transition of the First Church to the Unitarian fellowship. This was also the last time that both church and parish voted on a minister. In the future the parish alone voted for the minister. The by-laws of the First Parish open now with the words "The First Parish in

Plymouth is the Church of the Pilgrims." Thus, the church and parish are now unified.

On June 15, 1837, the First Church had voted unanimously the following profession of belief for admission to the church, to be either affirmed publicly or privately to the minister:

> Believing the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to contain the word of God, and to be the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice; it is my (or our) sincere desire and purpose of heart in professing this belief, in joining the Chh, and partaking of the Ordinances of the gospel by the aid of his grace to live by the faith of the Son of God, and thus to walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless.

At no point was there a break with one fellowship and the taking on of new associations. There is no vote that can be considered definitive unless it is the vote calling Rev. George Briggs in 1838. The taking on of new associations and the dropping of old had been a continuous process. No continuity had been broken, no new directions swiftly struck out, but the First Church and Parish, like the "godly old maid" that she was, had gradually grown into her proper niche. (Since 1935, the First Universalist Society has been worshiping with the First Church.)

During the early nineteenth century the church had prospered greatly. It had grown in size. It outgrew its meetinghouse rapidly during this period in spite of the deflections of members to other societies. In addition to the four societies referred to above which came into existence during this period, a number of other denominations and sects established churches in Plymouth. On

April 10, 1831, the last service was held in the third meetinghouse, and on December 14, 1831, the much larger and more spacious fourth meetinghouse was solemnly dedicated, and in the afternoon all pews were sold. The only reason given in the parish records for the new meetinghouse was the need for a larger structure to house the greatly increased congregations. Apparently the schism of 1801 resulted in strengthening the parish rather than diminishing it.

The First Church and Parish records show many other interesting features. In 1678 it held a men's meeting, perhaps the forerunner of subsequent Men's Clubs and Laymen's Leagues. In 1885, the Women's Auxiliary was formed, which has continued intact under the name of the Women's Alliance, for some years now boasting a membership of over one hundred women, while two newer women's groups serve additional numbers. In 1906 the church began publishing a pretentious sixteen-page magazine, "The Christian Messenger." This venture is probably continued in the present weekly "Parish Calendar." The church at the present time also publishes historical pamphlets. The records note the beginnings of the church school in 1694, although the present church school traces its organization back only slightly over a half century.

One wonders whether the office of "Teacher" does not mark a church school antecedent and certainly an adult education venture, going back to the founding days. It was an office graced by such renowned names as Roger Williams, John Rayner (afterward minister), and Charles Chauncey (who was to be the second president of Harvard College). It is Plymouth legend that Tabitha Plasket was the first American woman school teacher. Plymouth had

schools very early, and we find Governor Bradford in his interesting history writing that the schools were taking the place of the families in the rearing of the young. Educational historians are agreed that the early schools were parish schools taught by the colonial ministers.

The function of the Teacher in the Pilgrim Church was well described by Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay who visited Plymouth during the tenure of Roger Williams as Teacher. In this description, the teacher, according to custom, proposes a question on which the pastor speaks briefly; then the teacher explains it. The governor, the elder of the church, and two or three of the congregation then speak on the question. When this is finished, he added, the deacon puts the congregation in mind of its duty of contribution, and after the collection is taken (they "put it in the bag"), the meeting disbands. An interesting service, showing the very modern "forum" meeting to be as old as the New England settlement.

The church service itself was conducted by the Elder of the church, the governor and deacons sitting in the front, with the pastor and teacher. The five officers of the church being the pastor, teacher, elder, deacon, and widow. The "church widow" is presumed to be the keeper of the communion ware, and in charge of the preparations for the "Lord's Supper." The precentor led the music by setting the pitch and reading each line before the congregation sang it. The hymns were from the *Ainsworth Psalm-Book.* Later the *Bay Psalm – Book* was used. The hymns were mainly the Psalms, set to the Geneva tunes. The tithing rod was in use in Plymouth at an early date. Sermon and prayer were often one or two hours in length.

Much has been made of Governor Bradford's chastisement of the "strangers" in the colony who took Christmas as a holiday while the Pilgrims worked. Upon finding them playing games out of doors, the Governor took away their balls because if it was against their consciences to work on that day, it was against his for some to play while others worked. It was not until modern days that the Pilgrim Church observed Christmas and Easter. Older parishioners still recall that in early youth Christmas was a day looked upon with dismay because they ate warmed-over food inasmuch as that day was generally a holiday for the hired help. Thus remembrances of meager Christmases are well remembered, and the changing tradition welcomed.

The Pilgrim Church of Scrooby, Leyden, the *Mayflower* and Plymouth marks two distinctive ventures of continuing interest and importance. A national magazine in its Thanksgiving issue of 1947, stated in its editorial that the Pilgrims were obviously aware of their place in history, and perhaps better grasped the significance of historical forces at work in their generation than others. It points to the lucid understanding of history in Bradford's chronicle as evidence of this fact. The movement of which the Pilgrims were a seemingly insignificant part, and yet were to dominate in historical retrospect, was both a social movement and a religious movement. Let us look briefly at both aspects.

The Reverend George A. Gordon, probably the outstanding Congregational minister in Boston during the past century, wrote:

> The Massachusetts Puritan . . . wanted everybody to think and worship as he did. So we do not get our principle of

toleration from the Puritans, we do not get our witness for moral freedom from that source. But the Pilgrims are a different set of men. I do not call them superior. I say they had a different function in history. They started with a different idea — the idea of individualism. They went to Holland in defense of it, and they finally came here for its further development. With them and their advent upon these shores we have the birth of a new epoch, the opening of a new era. It is the Pilgrim, the Plymouth Pilgrim, who stands upon these shores in the midst of poverty and hardships of every kind as the majestic witness for the rights of the individual over against the might of the institution — the moral freedom of the individual man as against an overweening and overwhelming principle of unity and uniformity. . . . we say that his distinctive, original and immortal contribution to modern life, civic and religious, is as to the right of the individual man.

Theirs was the faith in the rights of the individual man. In religion, it was expressed as the rights of "every man to be his own priest." In ecclesiastical matters, it was expressed as the principle of independency, that a church is formed by those seekers who join together in covenant and gather together in the Lord's name — bound by no other authority. In the socio-political world, these principles resulted in democracy. They underlay the philosophy of the Pilgrim Separatists. It is this that makes Pilgrim Plymouth so perfect a symbol of the American republic, and their church, a national church.

The Pilgrims gathered together in covenant as Bradford relates, "whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something this ensewing historie will declare." That something was not alone the homes they left behind, the flight from their native land, the dangers of the sea, the trial in foreign lands, but the testing of their faith against great adversities. They fled

England because they must. A twentieth-century fiction has been spread that the Pilgrims did not flee because they had to but because they wished to. Why then did the police twice interfere with their passage? That intolerance was strong against the Separatists is borne out by history. In 1592 "two ministers and four other Separatists were hanged, because of non-conformity." Persecutions, imprisonment in medieval dungeons, confiscation of property are testified to in the records of their day. They well knew that their faith would cost them something.

The Pilgrim faith forecast a number of freedoms which all Americans have come to cherish, and some freedoms not yet fully realized. This is part of the importance of their witness. They gained freedom and exemplified it at a time when for most people freedom was the idle dream of scholars. The printing press of Choir Alley in Leyden where the Pilgrims printed books to smuggle into England to propagate and justify their faith was destroyed by Dutch soldiers coerced by a British treaty. Here was proof that freedom of the press was not secure anywhere in Europe. The Pilgrims must go even farther to escape the arm of the British king.

The trial of Oldham and Lyford in Plymouth in 1624 marks the first trial by jury in the Western hemisphere. Although they had plotted against the government founded upon the *Mayflower Compact,* Governor Bradford did not arbitrarily proceed against them, but summoned all freemen of the colony to hear the case and pass judgment. Such an act in a small and insignificant colony, struggling to establish itself, is ample proof that the rights of the individual were respected. It was further proof that the

Pilgrims were willing to trust to the democratic method of procedure — willing to risk the stability of their enterprise before the bar of public opinion. Their faith in freedom was practiced.

More than social freedoms were involved. Religious freedom also was tested by them and granted to others. The Pilgrim willingness to allow both people and pastor to follow the dictates of conscience is found nowhere else at this time. The great injunction from their first Pastor, John Robinson, was not to be like the Reformation churches of Luther and Calvin, which had "come to a period in religion," but rather to add only a comma, and go on to the future. The great insight of John Robinson, "The Lord hath more light and truth yet to break forth from out his Holy Word," established the principle of progressive and continuing revelation at a time when everywhere one found truth prescribed by the past. The Pilgrims never closed the door.

They were, of course, limited by the knowledge of their day. They naturally knew nothing of the methods and conclusions of twentieth-century scholastic research; therefore their phraseology sometimes seems quite inadequate to modern readers, in spite of the free minds it typified. Yet how could they have been other than they were? It was their kind of free spirit that was to make possible the development of modern research. They opened the door to religious inquiry when all others held it shut.

Significantly, they anticipated the modern point of departure for those who were to be apostles of the free mind in religion. As Bradford wrote: "They came as near the primitive pattern of the first churches, as any other churches of these latter times hath done, according to

their rank and quality." Their aim was that "ye churches of God reverte to their anciente puritie, and recover the primitive order, libertie, & bewtie." They sought to become "as ye first Christians," and throughout the sermons of Robinson we find the Gospels themselves to be the yardstick of Christianity. The later accretions of Christianity the Pilgrims dispensed with. True Christianity they firmly believed to have been lost since the time of Christ, and their aim was to recreate it. Hence their unwillingness to accept the creeds, devices and organizational patterns of later times. The true faith and teachings were to be found in the Gospels. The Pilgrims sought to return to the original purity of primitive Christianity as found in the teachings of Jesus. They were not willing to settle for a religion *about* Jesus; they wanted to be Christians in the same sense that he was. They did not claim to know all the answers to religious questions; they were seekers after truth who studied the Gospels and tried to pattern their church upon what they had read and understood, therein confident that more light and truth would yet come to clarify the simple gospel of Jesus. This is still the struggle of Christianity.

The Pilgrims and their ministers, Richard Clyfton and John Robinson, had formed their non-conformist societies at Gainsborough and Scrooby. The Scrooby Church became immortalized because it moved to freer air in Holland and America. Both churches became Unitarian,[6] the Gainsborough Church as soon as the Acts of Toleration permitted it, and the Plymouth Church in the nineteenth century. Thus the worshipers who held continuous fel-

[6] Walter H. Burgess, *The Pastor of the Pilgrims: A Biography of John Robinson* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920), pp. 353, 357-360.

lowship with both Pilgrim churches belong to the historical tradition of those churches that seek the fulfillment of a faith of the free mind. It would seem evident that the original seed of Unitarianism was in the Pilgrim attitude and faith, and was a growth from within, rather than a doctrinal change. The Pilgrim heritage is many-sided, however, and cannot be confined in any one vessel; many are the heirs of their dauntless witness.

Religious greatness in the final analysis is measured by earnest seeking and generosity of spirit. These attributes are abundantly present in the Pilgrim standard; great was their church and their fellowship. Great hence is the historic mission of their continuing spirit enshrined in the First Church in Plymouth. May it never forget the stirring challenge of the past as it faces the future.

VI

The National Memorial Pilgrim Church

BY ARTHUR B. WHITNEY AND
GEORGE N. MARSHALL

THE PILGRIMS WHEN THEY CAME to America worshiped in the fort on top of the hill. For many of them, this was the only American church building they knew. In 1648 they built their first church building, a square house of unpretentious lines. It obviously and significantly was a *house* of God, not a temple. The second meetinghouse was, likewise, a house of God, and not a temple. The third meetinghouse, built in 1744, was an attempted copy of a Boston church building. A graceful structure, it was the first real church, architecturally speaking. These churches all marked the plainness and simplicity of the people who built them. By the nineteenth century the New Englander was beginning to yearn for more elaborate church structures and he looked toward Europe, and particularly England for his models. They attempted in 1831 to build a church building which would bring beauty to the community and people. Their first attempt resulted in the

"Gothic" wooden frame building which served the needs of the parish until the disastrous fire of 1892. The new church to be built after the fire, the present and fifth meetinghouse, marks not only an effort to recapture the significance of the past, but to plan for the future. It is this latter effort to which we now direct our attention.

An editorial by Edwin D. Mead, the editor, appeared in *The New England Magazine* for February, 1893, thus:

> The burning of the old First Church at Plymouth imposes a duty upon a much larger circle than that of the congregation which has worshipped within its walls. It imposes a duty upon every loyal son of New England and upon every American who honors the memory of the Pilgrim Fathers. There is no other church in which all New Englanders and all Americans feel a sense of possession, of which all in a manner are members, to the extent which is true of the First Church in Plymouth. We forget all creeds, and all changes of creeds; we care little what preacher is in the pulpit or what title is on the hymn book, what title was there yesterday or what will be there tomorrow. We remember only that this was the church of the *Mayflower* congregation and of Elder Brewster, the church of Bradford and Carver and Winslow, the church of the pioneers sent into the New England wilderness by John Robinson, with the charge never to "come to a period in religion," but ever to keep their minds open for "more light and truth." It was the first purely democratic church in modern times, which means that it was the first purely democratic church in history. It was the church of the men who signed the compact on the *Mayflower,* that great first word in the history of American liberty and independence. The signers would have found it hard, many of them, to tell whether they had signed it in their capacity as members of the church or as members of the "civil body politic." They would have found it hard to the end of their days to tell whether they were doing this and that in their capacity as

members of the Church of Christ or as citizens of Plymouth; for they looked upon the end and aim of citizenship and of churchmanship as the same — to bring that New England corner of the world and of eternity where they found themselves under the true forms of eternity and into conformity with the law of God. This end they remembered alike in the town-meeting and in the prayer-meeting. The Sunday sermon had the most direct bearing upon the conduct of life, and the political gathering felt no surprise at hearing the religious word. Under one roof these men prayed and voted, with no thought that the roof did not shelter the one act as fittingly as the other.

It is this in the history of the Fathers which makes their church our common heritage. The congregation of the First Church of Plymouth, looking at itself parochially, is as independent as any other congregation; and it is also much better able than most congregations to take care of itself. It certainly does not need any help from the outside American or New England world to build a new church. Indeed, we believe that it has already raised an amount of money sufficient to enable it to build a much better church than that which was burned. But this congregation has no right to look upon itself simply parochially, nor do we think that it has any disposition to do it. It is the trustee of the great Pilgrim tradition; and its high office is to act with the public to keep sacred memories fresh and give them power. The public reciprocally has its duty; and to it comes now a signal opportunity. It is to cooperate with the Plymouth congregation to raise in the new church a memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers of the noblest and most beautiful character, a church which shall be the finest ornament of the historic old town and an inspiration and delight to every pilgrim to its sacred shrines.

The building . . . at Plymouth, we say, should enlist the interest of every New Englander and every patriotic American. The people of Plymouth, we well know, will do their own part generously and with reverent devotion. But Plymouth does not belong to Plymouth only; it belongs to all of us —

and men and women everywhere will welcome the opportunity to add their brick to the temple.

Following the burning of the fourth meetinghouse of the First Parish on November 22, 1892, the Hon. Arthur Lord, then president of the Pilgrim Society, and later president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, wrote:

The new church to be built in Plymouth upon the old site may well serve not merely the needs of a religious denomination, as a place of worship, but it should also stand as an enduring memorial of what the religious life of its founders has done for this nation, of the freedom which inspired the Pilgrims, of the breadth of thought and toleration of expression which characterized them, and of that right of individual judgment which marks the liberal in every age. It should emphasize and commemorate the importance and significance of that splendid spirit of religious liberty which their lives and labors expressed whose confession of faith was a sublime confidence in the word of God "known and to be known."

The opportunity now offered ought not to pass unimproved, to secure in the new church on the slope of Burial Hill, "the hill of graves behind it, the watery way before," a memorial more interesting, more appropriate and more suggestive than any other of that Pilgrim company whose members have left an unfading example to all time in the simplicity and nobility of their lives, and who have marvellously shaped and fashioned the policy of great states and a greater country by the freedom and loftiness of their thought.

That these statements are typical of the popular feeling at the time may be borne out by the brochure issued by the parish the following year:

From every side, in magazine and paper, in public and private, has come the request that the new church in Plymouth should not be built for the Plymouth parish alone. . . .

One half of the amount needed to build such a church has already been secured by the Plymouth Parish.

The money was forthcoming from many quarters. The National Assembly of Unitarian Churches, meeting in Saratoga, N. Y., voted to appoint a committee to raise $25,000.00 toward the memorial. The various New England societies appointed committees to raise funds, or to take responsibility for particular memorials. The *Mayflower* descendants, in national and state organizations, undertook to give substantial aid, and appropriate memorials bear witness to their efforts.

The question faced by the parish was first deciding upon the type of meetinghouse to be built, a question complicated by the peculiarities of the lot. The historic site of the First Church stood at the head of Town Square, dominating it, and looking directly out to sea down Leyden street, the First street of the Pilgrim saga. Behind it was Burial Hill, on which the Fort had stood, and the lot was actually carved out of the hill. The church building would be in the unusual position of being on a lower elevation than the onlooker from every direction except the front. The problem was unique in the need to build a church as effective from the side and rear view as from the front. The colonial style was discarded by nearly all architects as unsuitable from the rear elevations. The Norman and Renaissance styles were considered to be those that fitted the position the church would occupy.

Once the practical consideration was decided, then arose the desire to be sure of the fitness of the type of architecture chosen. Several interesting letters are still in the parish archives showing the extensive effort to determine the most appropriate architecture. The New England colonial

architecture of course is patterned after the work of Sir Christopher Wren who flourished at the turn of the eighteenth century. His influence therefore was later and foreign to the Pilgrim settlement. None of the churches built by the parish was ever influenced by his style. The Norman architecture was the architecture most familiar to the Pilgrims in England.

We find Edward C. Cabot, president of the Boston Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, writing the parish:

> I am of the opinion that the style you have adopted, the Italian Renaissance, is decidedly better adapted to a simple modern church than either what is called Old Colonial . . . or the Gothic. Your plan of treatment of the lot considering its peculiarities and the provisions for the Memorial Hall (i.e. Kendall Hall) is admirable.

Professor F. W. Chandler of the Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology wrote to the chairman of the Parish Committee:

> I have examined with much care the design made . . . for the proposed church in Plymouth. In considering the requirements of this very difficult problem, I am more and more impressed with the very skillful way in which all its questions have been met and answered. . . . I believe too that the Italian Renaissance is the style to be used. The style . . . lends itself far better to congregational worship than the Gothic plan. Again, the whole spirit of the age is more in sympathy with the Renaissance. . . . then was the opening up of universal knowledge and intercourse, and [an] architecture created by a civilization more like our own . . . can be more readily adapted to our needs than [an architecture inspired by] the Middle Ages. The Colonial Style ought not to be considered, for after all it is more associated with wooden archi-

tecture, and at its best owes its life to the classical forms. I should prefer to go to the fountain head for incentive.

The Italian Renaissance plan was one that the Plymouth Church people preferred also. It was a revival of the Classical Romanesque, of which Norman architecture was an excellent example. It marked at once the ruggedness of the English yeoman, and the graciousness of his spirit. Built in the Renaissance form, the church is a continuing symbol of man's rediscovery of man, of the advancing knowledge that made possible the Reformation of which the Pilgrim Fathers were a later development. It made possible the incorporation of features of the English Norman churches where the Pilgrims worshiped. It made possible a church which in an instant's perception symbolizes the strength, ruggedness, staunchness and honesty of the Pilgrims. It would not clash with Burial Hill, nor be a discordant note in the landscape.

For the period in which it was built, few finer specimens of American architecture can be found. The church was built by the firm of Messrs. Hartwell, Richardson and Driver of Boston. The cornerstone was laid in 1896. Services were first held in the unfinished church in 1897. The finished church was dedicated on Forefathers' Day, December 21, 1899, as "The Memorial Church of the First Parish." Besides the minister of the First Church, Rev. Charles P. Lombard, seven others participated in the service. The prayer of dedication was given by the venerable Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D., chaplain of the U. S. Senate, who had been chairman of the Unitarian committee to raise funds for the building.

The church is built of seam-faced granite, with Ohio

sandstone trimmings. The entrance is modeled after the Norman doorway of St. Helen's, the quaint parish church at Austerfield, England, where Bradford was baptized in 1590. The tablet at the right of the entrance bears this inscription:

> The Church of Scrooby, Leyden and the
> Mayflower,
> Gathered on this hillside in 1620,
> Has ever since preserved unbroken records,
> And maintained a continuous ministry,
> Its first covenant being still the basis
> of its fellowship.
> In reverent memory of its Pilgrim Founders
> This fifth meetinghouse was erected
> A. D. MDCCCXCVII.

In the vestibule are four tablets which give the Covenant of 1676, the names of the ministers, the elders and the churches which were formed from this.

COVENANT OF THE FIRST CHURCH

In the name of our lord Jesus Christ & in obedience to His holy will and divine ordinances:

We being by the most wise & good Providence of God brought together in this place — & desirous to unite ourselves into one congregation or church under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head — that it may be in such sort as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed & sanctified to himself. . . . We do hereby solemnly & religiously (as in his most holy presence) avouch the Lord Jehovah the only true God to be our God & doe promise & binde ourselves to walke in all our wayes, according to the Rule of the gospel — & in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinances — & in mutual love to, and watchful-

ness over one another — depending wholy & only upon the Lord our God to enable us by his grace hereunto.

From This Church

Scrooby 1606 Plymouth 1620

Were Formed The

First Church in Duxbury 1632
First Church in Marshfield 1632
First Church in Eastham 1646
First Church in Plympton 1698
First Church in Kingston 1717
Second Church in Plymouth 1738
Third Church in Plymouth 1801
Now Church of the Pilgrimage

ELDERS OF THE FIRST CHURCH

William Brewster 1620-1644
Thomas Cushman 1649-1691
Thomas Faunce 1699-1746

MINISTERS OF THE FIRST CHURCH

At Scrooby England 1606-1608, Richard Clyfton and John Robinson.

At Amsterdam 1608-1609, Richard Clyfton and John Robinson.

At Leyden 1609-1620, John Robinson. At Plymouth, Ralph Smith 1629.

Associate to Ralph Smith, Roger Williams 1631. John Rayner 1636.

Associate to John Rayner, Charles Chauncey 1638. John Cotton 1667, Ephraim Little 1699, Nathaniel Leonard 1724.

Chandler Robbins 1760, James Kendall 1800.

Associate to James Kendall, George W. Briggs 1838, Henry L. Myrick 1853, George S. Ball 1855, Edward Hall 1858.
Edward H. Hall 1859, Frederick N. Knapp 1869.
Edmund Q. S. Osgood 1878, Charles P. Lombard 1888, John Cuckson 1901, Melvin Brandow 1910, Arthur B. Whitney 1911.
Alfred R. Hussey, 1921, Floyd J. Taylor 1939. George N. Marshall 1946.

The stained glass windows in the upper vestibules represent scenes from Pilgrim history and are the gift of Mrs. Caleb Brewster Hackley, made from medieval English glass, highlighting such significant events as the Landing of the Pilgrims, The Treaty with Massasoit, the First Trial by Jury in America, that at Plymouth in 1624 of Lyford and Oldham, and the Destruction of the Pilgrim Press in Leyden, representing the struggle for a free press.

The stone set into the floor of the church, just under the gallery, was given by Senator George F. Hoar in 1896. An extract from the letter accompanying his donation sufficiently explains its character:

> The stone sill or threshold of the church at Delft-Haven, where Robinson prayed with his flock just before they embarked and which was undoubtedly pressed by his feet and theirs, and was I suppose the last object now remaining which their feet touched before they went on board, has lately been broken and taken out, and I have secured a considerable part of it. A block about 12 inches by 9 and 3 inches thick, bearing an inscription.
>
> The three C's I suppose mean 1500. That number is often expressed in like inscriptions found in Dutch churches. The church is said to have been built in 1516.

Two tablets are placed on the wall of the gallery commemorating the two ministers whose pastorates combined

covered a hundred years, the Reverend Chandler Robbins and the Reverend James Kendall.

The stained glass figures at the back of the pulpit were presented by the New England Society of Brooklyn, N. Y., "to emphasize the fact that the civil and religious liberty we now enjoy originated in large measure with the brave men and women who founded the Plymouth Colony."

The artist, Mr. Edward Peck Sperry of New York, has portrayed symbolically in the windows these two kinds of liberty under the manly forms of a Pilgrim soldier and a Pilgrim minister.

Civil liberty is represented by the soldier, who is a soldier only in order to protect the liberty he personifies, for his sword is sheathed, never to be drawn except to defend the right — a liberty based upon the compact of the *Mayflower,* found in the open book resting upon his knee.

Religious liberty is represented by the minister, who holds in one hand the scroll of the moral law, while his arm rests upon that foundation of truth, the Holy Scriptures, and his right hand is raised in exhortation and benediction as he announces the fundamental principles of religious liberty.

Between these figures is the stained glass window representing the "Signing of the Compact" in the cabin of the *Mayflower.* This was the gift of the New York Society of Mayflower Descendants and was designed by Sperry and made by Tiffany.

The east window over the gallery, presented by the late Edward G. Walker of Plymouth, represents John Robinson delivering his farewell address to the departing Pilgrims at Delft-Haven.

The pulpit was given by the descendants of John How-

land and the large chairs by Mrs. Sarah Brewster Reed. The organ was given by the Plymouth Universalist Society, and its majestic chords symbolize the happy reunion of the two groups. It was purchased by the Eddy Estate Fund and private contributions.

The font was given by the New Jersey Society of Mayflower Descendants. The divided chancel was made possible by the Bray Fund and is a memorial to John Robinson. The brass Bible stand is a memorial to the Reverend John Cuckson.

The communion table is the gift of Mr. George P. Hayward, a descendant of White and Winslow. The ancient silver used in the communion services is kept at Pilgrim Hall and there also are deposited the church records, dating back from the beginning. The modern sterling silver communion cups, patterned after the original Paul Revere goblet in the ancient set, were given by Dr. L. B. Reed in memory of his mother. The ancient silver is still used for special occasions, and is on display at Pilgrim Hall.

The broad and liberal Pilgrim spirit is shown by the words of Robinson inscribed on the wall to the left of the pulpit: "The Lord hath more Truth and Light yet to break forth from His Holy Word."

The church vestry is called Kendall Hall in honor of the long and fruitful ministry of the Reverend James Kendall, the first Unitarian minister of the church. As a fitting 50th anniversary observation, Kendall Hall will now bear memorials to three people prominently connected with activities there during the past half century: Arthur Lord, Clarence D. Bradford, and Miss Elizabeth Thurber. These memorials have made possible the complete renovation and aesthetic development of the hall

for the educational, social, and civic activities of a modern church.

The ten bells in the chimes were subscribed in 1920 and placed for the Pilgrim tercentenary during the ministry of the Reverend Arthur B. Whitney. The funds were raised by national subscription, and one bell was paid for by the people of Plymouth, England. With the bells, cast in Troy, N. Y., by the Meneely family, hangs the old Paul Revere Bell of the town.

Three thousand people annually have signed the guest book in recent summers. Like modern Pilgrims, devout visitors and tourists include the old First Church in their itinerary, as they visit the ancient environs of Pilgrim beginnings. The modern memorial church structure is a fitting and significant memorial of the faith of the Pilgrims.

The women of the church who serve as hostesses on summer afternoons are greatly impressed by the reverent and devout interest shown by vacationers from far and wide. In one summer recently, visitors from forty-six states and seven foreign countries signed the guest book. A Catholic priest said, "Here all Americans can meet with a common faith," and many a person has said, "This is the national cathedral of American faith." The exclamation, "This is just right; there is not one thing out of place!" has been heard. An army officer said, "This is more inspiring than the great Cathedrals of Europe and North Africa!" People have said, "This is the first time I have ever felt I stood on Holy Ground." Thus does this "old mother of American churches" still serve as an integrating and ennobling influence in modern America.

In recent years, the various agencies that handle the American international radio broadcasts have featured on

each Thanksgiving the service from the First Church, often rebroadcasting them in as many as seventeen languages. The Community Service held in recent years on Thanksgiving afternoon, preceded by a procession of townspeople in Pilgrim costume, a procession in which the various churches co-operate, has thrown a national spotlight on Plymouth and the First Church each year. A visiting preacher recently said: "This service is the American passion play," and visitors from far and wide, looking at the Pilgrims with musket and quaint garb in the front of the church, and reflecting upon that first Thanksgiving held here so long ago, agreed.

Thus does this National Memorial Church of the Pilgrims serve not only the needs of the First Parish in Plymouth, but through the vision and foresight of its builders and through the constancy and continuing faith of the old organization, enshrine the values and faith that have made our nation great.

VII

Why a Unitarian Church?

BY ALFRED RODMAN HUSSEY

THIS FIRST CHURCH IN PLYMOUTH is a Unitarian church. Of those who call this church their church home, the majority are doubtless Unitarian or Universalist. In name, at least, they belong to the fellowship of free believers. During the summer season we have many visitors from far and wide who come to this ancient parish and Pilgrim church because of the common ties and roots which it preserves. Many of them are surprised to learn that this is a Unitarian church. Many would ask us questions of "Why a Unitarian Church?" and they are entitled to an answer. Our members need to consider the question, because any one of them may be asked to answer it.

How, in this ancient parish, the change from orthodoxy to liberal Christianity came about, is not easily answered. It may be questioned as to just how orthodox were the Pilgrims. They were creedless. They were opposed to putting a final period to their faith. They believed that "The Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from out his Holy Word." They never voted to "become Unitarian." They never voted to withdraw from orthodox

fellowship. They never abridged their independence, and this old Pilgrim church is still an independent church. It is difficult to see how the vote calling Rev. James Kendall is to be considered a vote for Unitarianism because it was obviously not Unitarian for sometime afterwards. It was in good congregational orthodox fellowship and its rites were requested by the Episcopalian clergyman of Scituate for his parishioners sojourning in Plymouth, several years after Dr. Kendall's ministry began.

Unitarianism did not apparently begin then, nor do I think it began later. Unitarianism is an attitude, and an approach to religious inquiry. The First Church never voted to become Unitarian, because it never felt it was making a radical change. Likewise it never voted to depart from orthodoxy because it never of its own free will departed from orthodoxy. Eventually, the orthodox churches ceased offering it fellowship. The First Church perhaps came nearer than any other to being a "bridge church" between the various Protestant sects than did any other church. Sectarianism could not allow a bridge to be built over its walls, and so gradually the First Church came to find that only the broader, freer, more openly liberal churches, called Unitarian, accepted its fellowship. It has never bowed to sectarianism, however, and continues to open its doors and fellowship to all, claiming a unique relationship to all Protestantism.

If the Pilgrims were to have made a choice, I imagine that they very well might have made the Unitarian choice themselves. There is something divinely poetic in the Pilgrim church becoming Unitarian in faith, while remaining independent in congregational polity. This First Church is the Genesis of our American Bible. It is the

Mother Church of American non-conformity. For over three hundred and twenty-five years it has been a continuously active church. Here is the fountainhead of American congregational churchmanship and democratic liberalism. Archbishop Aglipay of the Independent Catholic Church of the Philippine Islands called it the "Bethlehem of the Republic" when he was here over a dozen years ago.

Who were the Pilgrims? We all know, but I like to recall the words of John Masefield,

> The pilgrims leave no impression of personality upon the mind. They were not "remarkable." Not one of them had compelling personal genius, or marked talent for the work in hand. They were plain men of moderate abilities, who giving up all things, went to live in the wilds, at unknown cost to themselves, in order to preserve to their children a life in the soul.

They were Englishmen. They were independents. They came from East Anglia. They were Separatists. Their sojourn in Holland showed them religious liberty in action. Their voyage to these shores, their drawing of the *Compact* aboard ship to secure a democratic means of government, is known by every schoolboy in the land. In the same way, perhaps at the same time, their church was formed. I like to think that the same *Compact* founded not only this town but this church.

In the epic of the Pilgrims their character stands out: courage, patience, faith. Not one of them returned to England, abandoning his comrades. They were genuine progressives, whose breadth of view was to be shown not only in their democracy, but in their treatment of the Indians, and later of Quakers, witches and others who

differed from them. They felt their way. They tried communism and discarded it. They developed town government. They maintained liberty and equality under the law.

Still more important, we see the Pilgrims to stand out in their time because of their integrity of spirit, their honesty. They could not tolerate or stand for hypocrisy. They would not admit a lie. They were honest above all else. They sought to build a church for honest men. It was not necessary to think alike for them. It was necessary that they be honest with themselves and their neighbors. Their church was creedless. They respected one another because they knew they were honest in their opinions with each other.

The answer to "Why a Unitarian Church?" can be given in terms of two different approaches. First, in terms of the Pilgrim origins. Secondly, in terms of the needs of today.

Nothing stands out more important in the Pilgrim adventure than their forthright honesty. A church that guarantees them their individual right to honesty is part of the answer. A church which cannot be honest, nor allow its members to hold honest opinions, is a diabolical connivance of the devil.

Only recently I have seen a statement by Pierre Van Paassen, which gives another interesting answer:

> Before the Pilgrim Fathers boarded ship at Delftshaven, one of their number a pastor by the name of John Robinson, declared that they bewailed the condition of the reformed churches "which have come to a period in their religion," and that, therefore, they (the Pilgrims) now went "forth (to America) to whatever light of truth they might receive."

That was a daring attitude to take in those days, for it showed a frame of mind diametrically at variance with the spirit of the age, in addition to running counter to the precarious material interests of the Pilgrims themselves. Yet those men refused to stand still by revealed religious truth. They had open minds and open hearts for whatever new ideas, new visions, new goals and new revelations might come their way in the new land. They said, in effect, that they did not believe that God had spoken through His sages and prophets of old only to fall back into silence forever after. They expected, — nay, they fully anticipated — that He would speak again, not only in far-off Palestine, or in England, Holland, Oxford or Geneva, but right here in America as well, in this New England, in these New Netherlands.

Now when these Pilgrims spoke that way, they definitely spoke in the Unitarian spirit. For the Unitarian spirit accepts as its only discipline the discipleship to advancing truth. It is the modern scientific spirit which recognizes the truth alone as its mentor and censor, even if that truth, at times, is painful to hear — that is, when it destroys fondly cherished illusions, when it invalidates longheld views or destroys symbols, which were, perhaps, fair and edifying in their day.

It may be said that the Unitarian spirit came upon the historical scene in this country hand in hand with the Pilgrim Fathers. And with it came the thought of religious social activity, as well as that phenomenal religiously-motivated confidence in the future which has characterized and has so largely contributed to the growth of the American nation throughout the centuries. Like many others, Unitarians recognized that society needs a religious basis. But unlike others they insisted that religion itself must have a social expression.

Speaking in terms of large social and religious movements, Pierre Van Paassen gives a part of the answer as to why the Pilgrim church in Plymouth has found itself in the Unitarian fellowship. A century ago, perhaps, this would have been even truer than it is today. During the

more than half a century I have been a minister, I have seen many changes. Among them all, none has been so startling, so encouraging, as the advance of liberal thought and feeling throughout the domain of religion. Everywhere walls are going down. Old distinctions are vanishing. Ancient emphases on differences are being overlooked. True it is that here and there strongholds of ancient belief stand formidable, impregnable, insisting on the faith once and for all delivered to the Saints, unchanged, eternal. But like the Egyptian pyramids, in the theological landscape these rear their heads as reminders of a day that is dead, as interesting memorials of vanished yesterdays. All around them representatives of various schools of religious thought possessed of a new spirit of comradeship, brotherliness, and mutual understanding are manifestly getting together, pooling their resources, making common cause. Even a movement reminding Catholics, Protestants, and Jews of their common birthright, the underlying principles of universal religion, is rendering valiant service. Proof of their liberal trends are visible to all who have eyes to see.

Of late years, I have been privileged to conduct worship in almost as many orthodox churches as Unitarian. Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, have given me cordial welcome. And among them all I have found an atmosphere of sincere friendliness, open-minded hospitality to new truth, people sincere, consecrated, forward-looking. Why, then, a Unitarian church?

There is one factor that still differentiates us from our neighbors, which in my opinion still constitutes our primary excuse for being. So in the mid-twentieth century I would say that there is still need for this old Pilgrim

church to maintain the fellowship accepted in the nineteenth century. Until other denominations recognize this factor as absolutely necessary, stress it as vigorously as we do, we must survive as a Unitarian church, continuing our efforts unabated.

There is one virtue which from the beginning has been our distinguishing characteristic and which still endures in all its primitive glory. We have no creed. Starting as a protest against Calvinistic theology, through the succeeding generations our beliefs have undergone many changes. Today Channing Unitarianism is altogether obsolete, "a dome of many colored glass." It was supplanted by the transcendentalist gospel of Emerson, Thoreau, and Parker. That in turn has given place to the faith in reason which most of us now share. Nor among Unitarians is there any definite agreement in the beliefs they hold. Incorrigible individualists, essential non-conformists, lovers of liberty, one and all, they think through their thoughts, stand squarely on their own feet, call no man master. In the average Unitarian congregation you will find theists and humanists, radicals and conservatives, mystics and hard-bitten realists, agnostics and devout believers. But one point of view unites them one and all. Servetus, Theophilus Lindsey, Channing, Emerson, Parker, together with heroes and prophets of a later day, all were in one respect, alike. All had one great characteristic.

They were men definitely and positively *honest,* having an *intellectual integrity* which guided and shaped all they thought and did. Passionately, wholeheartedly sincere, they dared to think things through, having the courage of their conviction, they absolutely refused to pretend to believe what they knew in their hearts wasn't so. Holding

with the poet, "Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie," they have disdained all casuistry, hair-splitting definitions, quibblings, compromise with truth of any kind, daring to come right out and declare whatsoever seemed to them right and true. Rather than surrender their integrity, they have endured hardships, persecutions, ostracism, sometimes death. Refusing to subscribe to creeds which they knew to be outdated, they have not only believed, but lived the scriptural injunction, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Intellectual honesty, that is what Unitarian Christianity stands for, first, last and all the time. This is our primary excuse for being. So it was with the Pilgrims. So it still is with their church. And until this is insisted upon with equal courage and fervor among all churches, the battle of the Pilgrims is still not won, our battle still in process. The day of total victory is still far distant. The struggle that has truth as a goal and honesty as a method is still the vanguard battle of religious liberals, now as in 1620.

For though Christians are manifestly growing more brotherly, more liberal in many ways, still upon their minds the dead hand of the past rests heavily. Traditions count. Many denominations are stifled with an excess of what Carlyle calls "Hebrew old clothes," dogma long since out of date, language definitely archaic, creeds and ceremonies handed down from long buried centuries. These are repeated, practiced, accepted, and exalted as sacred and eternal. All of which has but one result. While unquestionably there are men and women who are sincere, there are thousands of other men and women, particularly among the younger generation, whose conformity is more external than genuine. Toying with their consciences,

they "believe" in the Trinity, repeat the Apostle's Creed, with mental reservations, reading into its clauses meanings they were never meant to possess. Nothing can be much worse.

This habit of thought is altogether wrong. This dodging of logic, putting up with half-truths, splitting of hairs, toying with conscience for the sake of expedience, is wholly dangerous. Harmless as it may seem, intellectual dishonesty is a deadly poison which affects all life, and if unresisted, eventually kills our better selves. The Pilgrims understood this principle, and were able to sacrifice all, go into the New England wilds, in order that their children, as Masefield said, could have a life in the soul. For the sake of the same principle we must fight the parallel battle for our day.

One of the worst evils in the world today is dishonest thinking. In politics, business, here and abroad, it is rampant. Nothing, I submit, is doing more to hinder the establishment of the reforms our world so plainly needs. And the evil, I firmly believe, is largely due to the intellectual dishonesty, conscious or unconscious, now prevailing among churchmen. Until these good people, daring to think straight, have the courage to look facts in the face, see things as they really are, being done with half-truths, subterfuges, casuistry of every kind, absolutely frank and sincere, daring to think things through, there will be little chance for the cleansing of our political life, the prevention of wars, and the establishment on earth of lasting peace.

Now, just here, in rendering this supreme service to humanity, the Unitarian Church can and must lead the way. We are a small body. Probably our numbers will never be great, for it hurts many people to think. Tem-

perament, indifference, a willingness to bow to authority, a habit of following the crowd, all these combine to make them conformists. We claim, moreover, no moral or spiritual authority. We do not feel ourselves better than our neighbors. But we *do* claim *one* advantage. Our native wealth is honesty. A dishonest Unitarian is a contradiction in terms. Frankness, sincerity, straight-thinking, and plain righteousness is our rule of life. And we practice it in our daily living, not only on Sundays but on weekdays, in our business and in our homes, at work and at play, constantly and bravely making our "yea, yea," our "nay, nay."

Always, under all conditions, hewing to the line, letting the chips fall where they will, we shall not only strengthen our own inner happiness, and the happiness of those about us, but set an example which shall be a challenge to the better selves of men everywhere, daring them to be loyal to the best they know; that the truth may prevail, and lies, falseness and insincerity be banished from the earth.

Thus should we all be proud, I say, that our fathers over a century ago, brought this First Church of the Pilgrims into line with the Unitarian movement. It therefore stands today in relation to the twentieth century in precisely the same position where the Pilgrims stood in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. It means that the Pilgrim congregation of today has not shirked fighting the same battle that the Pilgrims so gloriously fought in their day. Proudly we say that this Pilgrim church in Plymouth could not be anything but Unitarian. The challenge of our faith was stated for us by Lowell:

'Tis as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle slaves
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers' graves;

Worshipers of light ancestral make the present light a crime.
Was the *Mayflower* launched by cowards, steered by men behind their time?
Turn those tracks toward past or future that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,
Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the past's;
But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free,
Hording it in mouldy parchments while our tender spirits flee
The rude grasp of that great impulse which drove them across the sea.

New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth;
Lo, before us gleam her campfires! we ourselves must Pilgrims be,
Launch our *Mayflower,* and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the future's portal with the past's blood-rusted key.

APPENDIX

Some Historical Notes on the First Church

BY FRED A. JENKS

A

THE FIRST CHURCH ORGANIZATION, AS FOUND IN THE BRADFORD HISTORY

So many therefore of these proffessors as saw ye evill of these things in thes parts and whose harts ye Lord had touched with heavenly zeale for his truth. They shooke of this yoake of antichristian bondage, and as ye Lords free people, joyned themselves (by a Covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye felowship of ye gospell to walk in all his wayes made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something this ensewing historie will declare.

These people became two distincte bodys or churches and in regarde of distance of place did congregate severally; for they were of sundrie townes and vilages, some of Notingham-

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The Appendix contains material of a first-hand nature — material drawn from the records themselves, as well as reminiscences of an elder antiquarian of old Plymouth — reminiscences fast disappearing. The archaic spelling and phrasing of much of this section was left unedited in the hope that the flavor of the period would emerge for the reader.

shire, some of Lincollnshire and some of Yorkshire wher they border neare togeather.

1606:

In one church (with must be ye subjecte of our discourse) besids other worthy men was Mr. Richard Clifton, a grave and revered preacher, who by his paines and dilligens, had done much good, and under God had been a means of ye conversion of many. And also that famous and worthy Mr. John Robinson who afterwards was their pastor for many years, till ye Lord tooke him away be death. Also Mr. William Brewster, a reverent man who afterwards was chosen an elder of ye church and lived with them till old age.

But after they had continued togeither aboute a year and had kept their meetings every Saboth in one place or other exercising the worship of God amongst them selves notwithstanding all ye dilligence, and malice of their adversaries they seeing they could no longer continue in ye condition they resolved to get over into Holland as they could which was in ye year 1607 and of which more at large will be said.

And so they journeyed first to Amsterdam, then to Leyden and here they settled after many difficulties, and here under the pastorate of John Robinson they enjoyed spiritual comfort though they lived but by their labor, and "became well weaned from the delicate milke of our mother country."

At last they determined to venture forth into a new and strange land that they might enjoy greater liberty even if it promised still greater sacrifice.

Thus the Scrooby Church was divided. The larger portion that stayed required that the pastor remain with them. The others desired Elder Brewster to go with them.

It was agreed that each division should be an absolute church, but agreed that if any of those that remained in Leyden should come over sea to them, or if any of the

smaller church returned they should be considered members each with the other. The transfer of church membership by letter has ever been a part of congregational polity.

On the 21st of December there landed on the shore at Plymouth this little company, a congregational church, a civil body politic, and despite "that it cost them something" not one turned back.

They founded a colony and from out that colony came other settlements and within them, as well as within the parent colony, was built up the municipal government of towns. As freemen they organized, they held their meetings, town-meetings, they elected to preside at these meetings a moderator, and with the election of a moderator came also the warrant, both a part of congregational polity.

As freedmen they taxed themselves to pay town charges to build and keep in repair a meetinghouse used for meetings of the townsmen and as a place to worship God. The Common house first, then the fort built for defense and where their great guns were mounted, and here they worshipped God, sang his praises, preached his word, elected town officers, enacted wise and equal laws, until 1637 when their first meetinghouse was built on common land on the north side of Town Square.

This first congregation was followed by others. In 1630 there began the Puritan exodus to New England. Able preachers such as Higginson and Cotton led their parishes to this new country, and when sickness came Dr. Samuel Fuller of the *Mayflower,* pioneer doctor, helped the people of Salem, cured their ills, and also taught them the Pilgrims' ideas of congregational polity.

This exodus to the Massachusetts Colony continued. They came not as families but rather groups of families

welded into a church organization under the hammer of adversity and the heat of persecution, and they built their homes around a meetinghouse.

The leaders in the government of the Province of Massachusetts looked with favor upon this manner of settlement. Grants of land were made to companies, congregations from Cambridge, Watertown and Dorchester churches settled the towns along the Connecticut River and helped to create a new state. It was a perfectly natural movement of the people and entirely logical that a meetinghouse should be built by a charge upon the people. The purpose, the need, and its justification was years later written into the Constitution of Massachusetts. See Art. III, Bill of Rights.

It appears to the writer that in the town of Plymouth the town's position as regards the church was much the same as that of the society at present. That even in the beginning the people had little sympathy with the idea of a bond between church and state is manifest. In 1633 when Mr. John Doane was elected and ordained as Deacon of the First Church he was voluntarily discharged as one of the Governor's Council.

B

The Town and the Meetinghouse

How well the town did build, repair and sustain its meetinghouses is shown in the following transcript from the town records. Volume and page are given.

Vol. I, page 46:

Att a towne meeting held at the meetinghouse att Plymouth 24th of March 1661. Conserning the demand of twelve pounds

by Richard Church and John Thompson in reference unto a former bargaine about the meetinghouse; the Towne agreed by a voate that they would not compound with the said plaintiffes; but will ansuare the tryal of it by law if the plaintiffes shall see cause to comense suite against the towne or any that have formerly bine theire agents about said bargaine.

Vol. I, page 52:

At a Towne meeting held by the Townesmen of Plymouth the 27nth of October 1662.

Capt. Southworth, John Morton, Stephen Bryant and Ephraim Morton were appointed by the Towne to assist Capt. Willett in defending against Richard Church and John Thompson, plaintiffes against him in an action of the case to the damage of twenty foure pounds about our meetinghouse.

Goodwin states in his work, *The Pilgrim Republic,* that Richard Church was one of the designers and builders of the first meetinghouse.

Vol. I, page 143:

At the Towne meeting held at the meetinghouse at Plymouth and 13th of ffebuary 1674. It was unanimously agreed and voated by the Towne that our meetinghouse shalbe speedily repaired att the Townes charge. And Mr. Gray, and Mr. Clarke were appointed and deputed by the Towne to take speedy course that the said meetinghouse be repaired and the Town heerby engageth to see the charge therof faithfully defrayed in such specue as they shall agree with men for the doeing of it; and that such pay as is due from ffrancis Combe, Jonathan Morrey, John ffallowell and Samuel Ryder, and all pay as is alreddy payed by them to the Townes agents; be improved towards the effecting of said worke; alwaies provided that the twenty seven shillings due in money to Leiftenant Morton be first defrayed out of it.

Vol. I, page 155:

Att the Town meeting held att the meetinghouse att Plymouth on the 17th day of September 1677.

Moreover the Towne doe impower Mr. Edward Gray in their behalfe to demand the sume of 2 pound 4 shillings of Steven Bryant, and 2 pound from William Nelson Sen; and 3 pounds from Jonathan Morey and 2 pound from Mr. Clarke and 4 pounds from Samuel Ryder; and to improve the same; or soe much of it as hee shall see cause for the repaireing of the meetinghouse.

Vol. I, page 160:

Att a Towne meeting held att the meetinghouse att Plymouth August 22nd, 1681.

Att this meeting it was voated that our pte of the money due for mount hope shalbe improved for either the repairing of the meetinghouse or for the building of a new one as occation may require.

It is also recorded that at this meeting:

The Towne have voted Lieft. Morton, Mr. William Clarke, Joseph Warren and Joseph Bartlett to be a comittee to take a view of the meetinghouse; and to take some speedy course either that it may be repaired; or to build a new one as they shall see cause, and the Towne of Plymouth doth heerby engage to defray the charge seasonably and in such speede as shalbe requisite.

Vol. I, page 170:

Att a Towne meeting held att the meetinghouse att Plymouth 24th of May 1682.

It was ordered by the Towne that thirty pounds silver mony be forthwith levied by rate for repairing of the meetinghouse and to be delivered to the overseers of the worke.

Vol. I, page 173:

Leift. Morton, Joseph Warren and William Crow were deputed by the Town to agree with workman for the building of a new meetinghouse; att Plymouth the length whereof is to be fforty five foot; and the breadth 40 foot and 16 foot in the wall. This ordered at a Town meeting date Jan. second 1682.

These transcripts from the published records of the town of Plymouth is complete evidence that the town did build the first meetinghouse in 1637 and did keep it in repair.

There has been a conflict of opinion on the part of different writers of Plymouth history as to the date of the erection of the first meetinghouse. It appears that the date 1637 as given by Mr. William T. Davis, supported by the fact that "In the will of William Palmer executed in November 1637 and probated in the following March is a clause providing for the payment of somewhat to the meetinghouse in Plymouth" is correct, and that the town did continue to attend to the upkeep of the meetinghouse.[1] We quote from the records of the town.

Vol. I, page 205:

"Att a Town meeting held at plimouth on the 25th of July 1692. Voated that 5 pounds be rated for the repairing the meetinghouse."

Vol. I, page 236:

[*More repairs.*] "Att a Towne meeting held at plimouth 6th of May 1695. Voted that the Selectmen shall take spedy and efectuall care for the reparation of the meetinghouse and

[1] Arthur Lord and most other scholars use the more certain date of 1648 as the year of the first building for distinctly church purposes.

have liberty to make a rate on the inhabitants for to defray the charge thereof."

Vol. I, page 255:

Town meeting October 11, 1697.

Six pounds for the repairing of the meetinghouse.

Vol. I, page 263:

Town meeting 13th of June 1698.

The Town impowered the sd Mr. Joseph bartlett to agree with workman for ye repareation of the meetinghouse.

Vol. I, page 286:

Att a Town meetting held at plimouth March ye 3rd Ano 1701.

Att sd meeting John Morton had libberty from said town to build a seat up in the north gallery in the metting house under the window.

[*Note:* This is the first reference to a custom which later became general, viz. personal ownership of pews.]

Vol. I, page 287:

At a Town Meting held at plimouth on the 19th of May 1701.

At sd meeting the Town voted with reference to the 4 spots of land in controversy between Major Bradford and the Town, vis. that part he sold to John Dier and the spot of land where the old meetinghouse stood and the spot of lately fenced in Ephrain Cole att the second brook by the Widow Nelsons and the spot of land sold to Nathaniel howland; the Town do herby quit their claim to sd lands.

This refers to the upper part of the lot on the north side of Town Square where now the Bradford Building stands. It was the town's land (common land).

Vol. I, page 245:

At a Town meeting held att plimouth June 29, 1696. It

was ordered by the Town that the uper society should have the schoolmaster the next quorter.
[*Note:* The Upper Society was the Church in Plympton, then a part of Plymouth. This society organized in 1696.]

Vol. I, page 289:

At a Town meeting held at plimouth the 28th of May 1701. Voted that with reference to the petition of the uper society for a township its refered to further agitation at the next Town meeting.

Vol. I, page 296:

At a Town meeting held at plimouth on the 16th of March 1701-2. Voted that thirty acrees of land be laid out for the use of the ministrey in the uper society and a convenience for a burieng place and training place as neare the meetinghouse there as may be convenient.

[*Note:* The meetinghouse built before 1698 stood on the southerly end of Plympton Green.]

Vol. I, page 323:

[We find recorded a grant of] 10 acres of land to Adam Wright upon ye account of his allowing land for a way from Lakeham to the meetinghouse of the uper sosiaty. Aug. 21, 1704.

Vol. I, page 324:

[Items from the town's charges]

Item for the reparation of the meetinghouse 8 Lb., only forty shillings is to be allowed to the uper sosiaty.

Plympton had been incorporated as a town and the "uper sosiaty" had now become the first church of Plympton.

Vol. II, page 4:

At a Meeting of the inhabitants of ye lower sosiaty of Plymouth on the 20th of March 1706. It was voted that ye meetinghouse be repaired with shingle and clabord where

they are wanting and shuters to ye lower windows, and Mr. John Mordo be desired and impowered by sd inhabitants to take care to procure sd works don.
[*Note:* Lower society Town center, upper society Plympton.]

Vol. II, page 11:

At a Towne meeting held at plimouth on ye 12th of May 1707. At this meeting Ephraim Cole had liberty granted him to make ye north dore in ye meetinghouse in two leavs upon his own charg. At sd meeting was granted liberty to enlarge John Carver's pew and to be directed by Mr. Thomas therin yt it don't hender peopls coming in to ye metinghouse.
[*Note: John Carver's pew* — individual ownership.]

Vol. II, page 21:

At a Town meeting held at plimouth on the 6 of September 1708. The inhabitants at this meeting voted to repare the meetinghouse this year; that is to say shingle ye flat roof; and to make a new Terret and hang ye bell, mend ye glass, remove the seats and make new ons, as may be thought needfull, and repare where the clabords are defective and did for that end vote to rate 30.00-00 (thirty pounds).

Vol. II, page 33:

Ordered by the Town May 1710. That there be two casments made in ye meetinghouse behind ye pulpitt in the rome of the little windows there to lett in aree into ye house.

Vol. II, page 51:

At a Town meeting 10th September 1711. The Town made choice of John ffoster and Abiall Shirtlef to vew ye damage yt hath been don by the setting up new seats in the meetinghouse by incroching upon other persons rite and to make report to yet Town at the next Town meeting.
[*Note:* Increased ownership of pews by individuals.]

Vol. II, page 56:

At a Towne meeting held at plimouth on the 12th of february 1711.

At this meeting sundrey of the inhabitants petitioned the

town to have liberty to make an addition on ye back sid of the meeting behind the pulpit extending 18 fot back and soe the length of the meetinghouse, and ye wals to be of the sam height of ye old meetinghouse and the roofe to be of a proporshonable height with the old metinghouse that therby they mite have convenincy to build seats for ym selves and families and others that shall come in upon reasonable termes. Thw Town granted the petitioners that are hereafter named their request upon the conditions following, (fis.) provided that the persons subscribing to ye petition shall build ye addition of good sound oak timber and good stuff and dig away ye arth on ye back side a convenient distance from the sill and not build the front pews higher than ye pews in the old part and that they shall admitt others to the previledg of having pews with them upon reasonable terms and to build a good stone wall against the banck where it is nedfull to prevent the earth from washing down, and they are to have the planck and glass on the backside toward sd addition, not to move the main posts nor enterdice on which the gallery hath dependence, nor aney way incomoad or weaken the old meetinghouse or aney seats in it, and that sd addition be fild with pews and when they are filled and finished 2 men to be chosen by ye Town and ye petitioners to take an acompt of the charge and cost of the whole building and set such vallue on them as may amount to the charge they are at. The petitioners to have their first choice and then the rest of the pews to be disposed of to ye inhabitants of the town acording as they shall be vallued by the Town and petitioners, and when the house is finished and seated as aforsd then sd house to belong to sd Town as the rest of the meetinghous doth. The petitioners for the privileg of building sd house are as followeth,

Charles Church
Nathaniel Jacson
Ignatious Cushing

Haverland Torey
John Barnes

John ffoster

John Watson

Abiall Shurtlef

James Barnebe

The Town also agreed and voated that the selectmen should make a rate of 40 pounds for the reparation of the meeting-house. That is to say yt side next the stret and the south end to be new claborded, the north end scraped and tarred the roof and side tarred, and John Watson is chosen by the Town to procure this work done with convenient sped.

Vol. II, page 76:

At a Town meeting held at plimouth on the 25 day of ffebuary 1712-1713.

At this meeting upon motion made by some of those that are the undertakers of the new part of the meetinghouse, that ye Town would appoint some men to sett a valiation upon the pues in that part of sd house, upon sd motion the Town chose Capt. James Warren, Left. Isaac Lathrop and Insign Warren to doe that work for them. But a large portion of the meetinghouse remained an old building, repairs were constant.

On Nov. 9, 1713, the records of the Town show "5 pounds for new glass."

Nov. 10, 1714 — the Town voted to "improve Abiall Shurtlef to make shutters to all the lower windows in ye meetinghouse upon ye charge to ye town."

March 21, 1715 — the town voted "that on condition that the owners of the seat before the place where the Negroes and Indians sett at the meetinghouse doe give 3 pounds toward erecting a plase for said Negroes and Indians to sett in sd meetinghouse elsewhere they have liberty to make yt rome into three pews."

May 9, 1715, the town voted "that Capt. John Dyer be chosen to take care yt ye meetinghouse glass be repared and bring in his account to ye Town to be reimbursed." In the town rate — item for the reparation of meetinghouse broke by thunder 6 pounds.

From this date forward repairs were constant. The time

was rapidly approaching when a new meetinghouse must be built due to the age of the building and the increased attendance.

Vol. II, page 284:

At a Town meeting held at Plymouth on ye 12th day of March 1733. At sd meeting it was voted that the inhabitants of momoment Ponds should draw out of ye Town Treasury what they have paid towards ye support of ye Reverend Mr. Lenard for ye year 1732 in order to support of their own minister.

We have noted the severance of the Upper Society (the Plympton Church) from the affairs of Plymouth Town, and now the Church of Manomet, the second Congregational church of Plymouth, has become independent of town support.

Vol. III, page 8:

At a Town meeting held at ye Court House in Plymouth on Monday ye 2d of July A.D. 1744.

James Hovey was chosen Clerk for the day (ye standing Clerk being absent) and sworn to ye faithfull discharge of that office before Nathl. Thomas Esq.

Doct. Laz LeBaron was chosen Moderator.

Voated that the first precinct in this Town shall have liberty to improve a piece of land twenty-seven feet front and as deep as ye old meetinghouse now is (besides the land ye old meetinghouse now stands on) in order to build a new meetinghouse upon for the public worship of God so long as they see cause to keep a meetinghouse thereon.

And now the First Church of Plymouth by grant of new land as well as the land on which the old meetinghouse stands, is in possession of the land and the church structure as well. Further information must be sought from

the records of the First Parish and Church of Plymouth. The separation from the town is complete.

From this date a diligent search of the town records does not show evidence of any grant of land or money for the support of the meetinghouse.

"April 10, 1831 — Being the Sabbath the last service in the old church (built 1744), it haveing been decided by vote of the *Parish* that it was expedient to take it down."

And this is surely good evidence that the ownership of the meetinghouse was vested in the Society or Parish.

Various churches had left the mother church and had become the first church of adjacent towns: there was the formation of the second church at Manomet, the division again in 1744, when a number left the church and built a meetinghouse on King Street (now Middle Street), forming the third church of Plymouth (although they abandoned this meetinghouse and returned to the parent church in 1783); there was also the final division in 1801 when a new Third Church was organized and whose house of worship was built on the southwest side of Pleasant Street nearly opposite the Training Green. These and other factors hastened the complete separation of the Town and the Church, a separation completed sooner than in many towns.

It was a perfectly natural and orderly procedure. It was not revolutionary, it cannot even be called evolutionary; it was simply the acceptance of a fact that the town had grown larger. There were greater differences of opinions. The town could logically support one church when a church was needed, but not as many as there were differences of opinion.

In conclusion I will quote from *A Documentary History of Chelsea* collected and arranged by Mellen Chamberlain:

After the separation of Church and State in 1833 towns no longer acted as religious Societies, but these were incorporated and kept their own records; and therefore the town historian will after that time search the town records in vain for interesting particulars. Nor will it be practical to pursue church history in detail. Such histories must be monographs.

C

From the Records of the First Church in Plymouth

July 3, 1744:

The first precinct of Plymouth took down the Old meeting-house.

The three following Lords Days the Congregation met for religious worship at the Court House.

July 17th began to raise the new meetinghouse. Before we began the raising we sang together in Psalms 127th 1 Verse.

"Except the Lord build the house
They labor in vain that build it
Except the Lord keep the city
The watchman waketh but in vain."

and in Psalm 122 the 6, 7, 8, 9 Verses.

6 — "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee."

7 — "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces."

8 — "For my brethren and companions sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee."

9 — "Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy goal."

I then prayed with the people.

July 29, 1744:

The Congregation met in the new meetinghouse (Lords Day) after prayer we sung the 122nd Psalm and I preached from the first four verses of the Psalm,

"O that the Glory of this House may be greater than the former."

Signed — NATHANIEL LEONARD.

Mr. Leonard was the Pastor of the First Church from Aug. 9, 1724, to Jan. 30, 1760. This, the third meetinghouse, built in Plymouth for the First Church, is described by Dr. James Thacher, M.D., in his *History of Plymouth* as being "72 by 64 feet, a spire 100 feet high, this surmounted with a handsome brass weathercock." Mr. Nathaniel Leonard was the pastor of this church from the date of its erection to 1760, the Rev. Chandler Robbins from Jan. 30, 1760, to June 30, 1799; he was followed by the Rev. James Kendall who continued as pastor of the First Church until his death in 1859. During his pastorate the church built in 1744 was taken down and a new church erected in 1831.

The weathercock on this church, judging only by pictures, was a wonderful weathervane. There is a story once told along the waterfront about it:

One of the old packet captains, Cooper by name, on an afternoon after the packets had been windbound following a spell of easterly weather, came down the wharf in a hurry, evidently ready to sail. One of the other captains said, "What's the matter, old man, what are you going to do?"

"I'm goin' to cast off and hoist my jib. Parson Kendall's vane points sou'west."

"Hm," said the other, "I'd stay here a month before I'd

go to sea by Parson Kendall's rooster." This was but a short time before the church and vane were both taken down and a new meetinghouse built.

April 10, 1831:

Being the Sabbath the last service in the old Church, it having been decided by a vote of *the Parish* that it was expedient to take it down.

During the eight months following, the old meetinghouse built in 1744 was removed. In a state of decay, it was necessary that the new meetinghouse be built. During this time religious service was held in the county courthouse.

This meetinghouse was dedicated Dec. 14, 1831, and for almost sixty-one years was the house of worship of the First Church. It was burned on the evening of Nov. 22, 1892. It was of a Gothic type of architecture and designed by George Brimmer of Boston.

Let us turn to the description of the church and its dedication as written by one who watched its building and who was present at the first service. Dr. James Thacher tells all this in his *History of Plymouth:*

This noble edifice is built of wood and is a beautiful specimen of church architecture. The body of this church measures 60 feet by 71, and from the floor to the spring of the ceiling is 36½ feet, is without galleries except that for the singers which is in the tower over the entrance into the lower part of the house and opens under a large gothic arch of 42 feet base. The gallery is lighted by the high gothic window in front and thus the whole length of the building is seen from the pulpit.

The floor accomodates 124 pews, the interior of which are painted a light green while the exteriors are in beautiful imitation of oak and are capped with mahogany.

The side windows are eighteen feet high and seven feet wide, contain 284 diamond lights each; the glass being ground, the light is uniform and agreeable. The pulpit is of common form, the pannels and balusters gothic and the whole painted in imitation of oak. A crimson silk curtain is suspended from a gothic cornice and on each side of the pulpit is a candelabra supporting a handsome bronze lamp; and there is also on each side a smaller lamp on a moveable stand.

The front is four feet wider than the body of the church, has a tower projecting 11½ feet and rising 87 feet in height with encircled octagon pillars on the corners surmounted with ornamental pinnacles and has wings with similar pillars at their corners and on the sides, and in the tower hung the Paul Revere bell.

The whole expense of this building, including the cellar, did not exceed $10,000. In the afternoon on the day of the dedication the pews were offered at auction and 103 sold at an advance of $1,800 above the appraisal. The amount of sales had been sufficient to defray the expense of building the new house, to pay the pew holders in the old house, and leave a surplus of about $2,500. 1637,[2] 1683, 1744, and 1831 are the years the meetinghouses of the First Church of Plymouth were built.

There stands today at the head of Town Square the church built in 1896, and dedicated in 1899, a building of singular beauty and appropriate design, reminiscent of the mother country of that little church congregation that landed on the shore at Plymouth.

It is a credit to the designer, the committee who made choice of such design and supervised its building.

May it remain for long, and prosper.

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[2] See footnote 1 in Appendix A.

D

Town Sexton and Bells

The meetinghouse was erected by the town, its care was a responsibility of the town. The meetinghouse was used for church service, the worship of God. Here the meetings of the freedmen of the town assembled in town meeting to pass such laws as were good for the whole people. The meetinghouse in the language of the present was the community center.

The office of Sexton is defined, our authority the dictionary, as an under officer of the church who has the care of the church buildings, vessels, and vestments, who rings the bells, attends to the burials, and sometimes digs the graves.

The sexton in the early days of Plymouth was an officer of the town chosen in town meeting by the voters, sometimes hired by a committee appointed by the town or the board of selectmen by authority of the town assembled at a "town meeting."

At a town meeting held at the meetinghouse August the 4th, 1679:

"The Towne voated that the Constable is ordered by the Towne to take course for the settleing of the bell and the turrett, and the sweeping of the meetinghouse, and the ringing of the bell and to pay for the doeing of these pticulars."

And the Constable, he who assumed all new duties until their importance made the choice of a new town official necessary, received an addition to his many cares, from which he was not relieved until 1686 when at a town meet-

ing held on the 27th day of Sept., "the town agreed with Samuell Downham Junior for the ringing the bell and sweeping the metinghouse for this present yeare and the Town is to alow the ad Downham twenty five shillins for his work, and at a townmeeting held on the 15th day of August 1687, Samuell Downham senor declared himself sattesfied for his service in ringing the bell the last year."

The first mention of the sexton in the published records of Plymouth is in 1712.

At a townmeeting held at plimouth on ye 15th Day March 1712-13 Eleasar Rogers chosen Saxon to ring ye bell, sweep the meetinghouse, keepe the doores and windows of sd meetinghouse shut and opened for the Congregation's use upon all ocasions and carfully loock after sd house as above sed and sd Roggers is to receive of sd Town three pounds per year for his sd service and to begin on the first of April next ensuing this date.

Here is recorded the election of a sexton and his duties specified:

"In March 1714 The Town voted with refferance to the Sexton the Town leaves ye matter with the Selectmen of the Town to appoint the person, and to allow such wages for his service therein as they shall think fit." But at a meeting of the town held in September of the same year a vote was passed instructing the selectmen to give to the sexton a sum not exceeding six pounds per annum and to ring "the bell alsoe at nine of ye clock at night continually." This marks the beginning of the ringing of the nine o'clock bell once observed as a time for going home, now to perpetuate an old custom.

Clement Bates was the last sexton chosen by the town who performed the actual duties of a sexton; the later

years of his service, his duty was confined to the ringing of the bell.

Wrote William T. Davis in *Memories of An Octogenarian:* "It is singular that although the duties of the Sexton have been clearly defined as to ringing of the bell and care of the meetinghouse, no mention is made of his attendance at funerals or at the burial service. This may be due to the fact that in the early days of the Colonies funerals were conducted in a different manner than at the present time."

In 1697 Capt. Johnathan Alden, son of John Alden the Pilgrim, was buried under arms in Duxbury. Pastor Wiswall made an address, which was noted as an innovation. In 1685 at a funeral at Roxbury, Pastor Wilson prayed with the company before going to the place of burial, a practice not common until 1720. As late as 1774 Joseph Howland, a great-grandson of John Howland, was buried in Newport, R. I.; the Rev. Dr. Hopkins walked in the procession but no service was held.

There must have been, however, considerable display at funerals. In December, 1765, a town meeting at Plymouth was called through petition by Dr. Laza LeBaron and others in order to address a letter to the people of Boston thanking them for their efforts to prevent certain goods being imported from England and sold. This paragraph is incorporated:

> The new regulation with regard to mourning which has not only saved this Country great and needless expence and in a manner abolished a ridiculous pageantry, but produced consequences in our Mother Country very beneficial to us, and all principally at your expenses, as your merchants were the principal importers and venders of those articles, a measure

which, at the same time that it reflects a luster upon your conduct, shews by the success of it that the people of this country have vertue enough to prefer its interest to any fashon that may stand in competition with it however.

There is a record of the town purchasing a burying cloth.

At a town meeting held at Plymouth May 9, 1737:

"At sd meeting voted that there be a burying cloth procured by the Town at the sd Town charge. That Major James Warren shall procure a decent burying cloth of black broadcloth not exceeding five pounds per yard."

At the March meeting of the Town 1738/39.

"Voated that there be something more don about the burying cloth, there being thrity pounds already raised and there be a burying cloath procured by Coll James Warren and he to be paid out of the Town Treasury for what he shall expend."

But again in 1740 the same question, and at a Town meeting "It was ordered that a buying of a new Pall or Burying Cloath be continued to the next Town Meeting."

A diligent search of the town records does not disclose that the town ever purchased a burying cloth. If it was procured it was probably through private funds, but the records give sufficient proof that burying cloths were in use and probably included with funeral rings (black enamel edged with gold) and gloves given to the bearers and pastor (one of whom received twenty-nine hundred and forty). Such were some of the articles of needless expense. The pastor mentioned who received such a quantity of gloves added to his salary by the sale of them.

But to return to the sexton — the last elected by the town that did perform all the duties of a sexton was chosen

in 1831; he did conduct funerals, bury the dead, ring the bells, and take care of the Town House (the churches of the town had at this time each their own sexton). After the management of funerals had been taken up by private morticians, he continued to care for the Town House and ring the town bell until his death in 1885. He is well remembered by many, who have heard of his duties from the generations that preceded them.

He himself stated that he had buried thirty-two hundred and fifty persons. The writer knew him as an aged man who walked with difficulty up the grade of Town Square to the meetinghouse to ring the bell. He was a confirmed believer in the doctrines of Spiritualism. He did not intrude his belief on others but found comfort himself in this belief. He came often from his house on Spring Hill across the street to a market, and there his belief was often assailed by men who thought themselves so wise they would deny Mr. Bates the comfort of his own belief. One day I heard this conversation. The question was asked of Mr. Bates, "How can you believe such nonsense? Don't you know that these mediums make the knocks with their ankle joints?" And the old gentleman's reply,

"Did you ever consider what a great comfort it must be to Mrs. Bates and I sitting alone deceiving ourselves with our ankle joints?" To this there was no answer. He may have heard messages from the other shore from those for whom he had sounded the passing bell, and the story of the sexton ends with the passing of the last man who faithfully performed all the duties of that office. "Clement Bates — Chosen 1831 — Service Ended 1885."

The sexton of Plymouth rang, yes, still rings, the bell at

7 A.M., 12 Noon, 1 P.M. and at 6 P.M. when the sun sets at 6 or after, excepting Saturday night when it is rung at 5 P.M.

Many times I have heard old residents of the town say "the days are lengthening fast, it is most time for the 6 o'clock bell." When men worked as they used to work from early morning until ten minutes after sunset they quit work when darkness compelled. Then as the hours of labor were reduced the 6 o'clock bell became necessary. It is the belief of the writer, this belief based on conversation he heard as a boy, that the ringing of the bell at 5 o'clock on Saturday night was due to agitation by mechanics of the town, beginning with the building trades. They secured an affirmative vote in town meeting as well as the placing of an article to this effect in the Town Warrant. Some of the mills in the town never accepted this law and continued for many years to run until 6 o'clock.

This vote probably never had even a shadow of legality, but being generally accepted by the town, it was better enforced than a Constitutional Amendment not popular. It was the beginning of early closing on Saturday.

The 6 o'clock bell rung after the sun set at and after 6 P.M. did more than indicate the hour for stopping work. At the ringing of the 6 o'clock bell the herrings began to appear in Town Brook and the organ grinder appeared in town with the old-fashioned organ carried on his back, not mounted on wheels, and drawn or pushed along the streets.

The last bell of the day, the 9 o'clock bell, was instituted on Sept. 16, 1714: "Voated in sd Town meeting that the Selectmen doe chose and bargaine with a sexton to give him not exceeding six pounds per anum to sweep and

take care of ye meeting house and to ring the bell by usuall and also at nine of ye clock at night continually."

And at town meeting held at Plymouth August 29, 1715, "at sd meeting the Town voated to raise ye sums of money by rate.

Item to the Sexton for ringing the bell — 3 pounds.

Item for ringing the 9 o'clock bell 3 pounds."

This marks the beginning of the 9 o'clock bell, once observed in spirit and in practice. In fact our grandmothers anticipated the sound of the bell and when out to tea and spending the evening with some of their cousins would remark, "Well I must be going home," and with a glance at the old clock, "it's most time for the 9 o'clock bell." Once rung and observed, now it is rung only to perpetuate an old custom. Once the young and old went home, now at 9 o'clock both old and young start out to "go places." Let's keep it ringing as the town voted in 1714 *continually,* and do not call it the Curfew because it's not. It's the 9 o'clock bell; so did the old inhabitants of the town name it.

From the tower of the church the old Paul Revere bell sounded the call to worship, the summons to labor, and the hours to cease work until November 22, 1892, when the church was destroyed by fire. The 9 o'clock bell ordered by the Town in 1714 was not sounded by the sexton that night. As the tower of the church crumbled in the flames and the bell struck the ground it gave out an agonizing gong. A gentleman looking at his watch said, "It's just 9 o'clock."

The bell though broken had not been lost to the town.

At the adjourned meeting of the Town April 3, 1893. Article 16 of the Warrant being taken up. On motion of Mr.

Charles S. Davis. Voted that the Selectmen be authorized to have the Town Bell recast and make such arrangements as they deem for the best interests of the Town to have it hung in the new Unitarian Church.

The old Paul Revere bell, weighing over one thousand pounds, was raised in the new tower in October 1896. May it continue to ring as the town fathers voted, and "at nine of ye clock at night continually."

Suggested Reading List

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Willison, George F., *Saints and Strangers* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945), 512 pp.

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A Note about the Authors

JOHN CUCKSON served as minister of the First Church in Plymouth from 1901 to 1910. In his long and notable career in the liberal religious fellowship, he also served as minister of the Arlington Street Church (Boston), the Church of the Unity (Springfield, Massachusetts), and other churches.

FLOYD J. TAYLOR, minister of the First Church in Plymouth from 1940 to 1945, had previously served Unitarian churches in Chelmsford and Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. He is now minister of the Unitarian church in Lexington, Massachusetts.

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HENRY W. ROYAL has for twenty-five years been secretary of the Pilgrim Society, curator of Pilgrim Hall, and clerk of the First Parish in Plymouth.

ARTHUR LORD, a well-known Boston lawyer, was an outstanding citizen of Plymouth and historian of the Pilgrims. Between 1874 and 1925 — the year of his death — he served as moderator of the town meeting more than fifty times. He was president of the Massachusetts Historical Society and of the Pilgrim Society. His Colver Lectures at Brown University on "Plymouth and the Pilgrims" were definitive in the field.

GEORGE N. MARSHALL became minister of the First Parish in Plymouth in January, 1946. He is a member of the Pilgrim Society and the Unitarian Historical Society, as well as

being active in many religious groups. His articles have appeared in several magazines, including *The Christian Leader, The New England Unitarian, The Journal of Liberal Religion,* and *The Christian Register.*

ARTHUR B. WHITNEY was minister of the First Church from 1911 to 1921. Later he served the Unitarian churches in Leominster and Quincy, Massachusetts — the latter being known as "The Church of Presidents."

ALFRED RODMAN HUSSEY was for fifty-two years a Unitarian minister and for many years literary editor of *The Christian Register.* After twenty-five years of service to the First Church in Plymouth, he preached his last sermon on June 23, 1946. This final testimony is included here.

FRED A. JENKS was a long-time Plymouth resident who did much research among the old records. His historical notes given here are transcribed from a manuscript he presented to the First Parish in Plymouth.

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